THE

PRINCE

OR THE

ROYAL LIBERTINES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

The arrival of the Prince Vicentio at Bulafera.—The Marquis attempts to drag his Daughter to the Altar.—An appearance, resembling Don Cesar, is seen in the Oratory.—The Ceremony suspended.

On the arrival of the Prince Vicentio, the happy occasion was announced by the sound of the cannon from the castle turrets, while the knights and yeomanry, in the service of the Marquis, lined the hall; the first drest in complete armour and the last bearing the achievements of their lord.

The Lady Juliana was compelled also to attire herself in the most superb ap-

parel; bearing on her right shoulder the escutcheon of the House of Simonetta. She was attended by a train of beautiful damsels, in white, strewing flowers as the Prince passed, and which gave the scene an interest that otherwise could scarcely have belonged to it.

A week only had elapsed, during which the Lady Juliana had endeavoured to show every respect to her illustrious visitor, when the Marquis, one morning, took an opportunity of informing her that the nuptials would take place on the evening of the same day, in the next week, in the oratory of the chapel belonging to the castle, and that the rites would be performed by the Monk Velaschi, of the adjoining Abbey.

The intelligence struck the heart of the distrest Juliana with almost as severe a stroke as the dart of death itself: she sunk under the impression, and was carried by her attendants, in almost a lifeless state, to her room. No

friend was near to console her. The Signora Ammirato was devoted to the Marquis, and as she thought it to be the best interests of her mistress to espouse the Prince, the only language, which she used was that of unavailing and tiresome persuasion.

The minutes pass swiftly in the time of apprehension, and too early for the unhappy Juliana did the morning arrive, the evening of which was to fix her destiny.

The Marquis sent for his daughter at an early hour, and, with a firm tone, desired her to be ready with the Signora, and her maids, to attend the ceremony in the evening, and that the state nuptials would afterwards take place in Mantua.

In the evening, the oratory of the chapel was illuminated, and the Monk Velaschi, attended by numerous of his order, were in waiting.

The Marquis sent for the reluctant Juliana, who was unable to obey his

command; he went, therefore, to her room, and dragging her from the couch on which she was thrown, compelled her to join the procession to the chapel.

The night was dark; neither the moon nor a single star illumined the hemisphere.

The way to the chapel was through a long range of subterraneous apartments, several of the servitors and novices went before with torches; an elder monk of the order followed, with a train of the brotherhood, and next in succession the nuns of the order of St. Bernard of Mount Olive, the younger sisters bearing censors. The Lady Juliana came next, led by her father and the Prince Vicentio, and followed by her train of attendants.

The solemnity of the scene weighed still more heavily on the dejected mind of the suffering Juliana, and, as she approached the altar, she uttered a fervent prayer to heaven to deliver her from

the tyranny or to give her strength to bear her martyrdom.

The Count Montorio was by the side of the Marquis, and Montaltus attended the Prince Vicentio, each of them elated with the approaching nuptials that would destroy, for ever, the hopes of their victim—the Count St. Florentin.

The sweet music from the oratory was unable to sooth the suffering mind of the Lady Juliana. She was desired to kneel, and combating every agony, bent her knees on the couch: she rejoiced, however, in the midst of her suffering, that she had never owned her love to Henry St. Florentin! and that she was guilty of no breach of faith.

At the instant the holy father was raising his hands over the heads of the Lady Juliana and the Prince Vicentio, a voice was heard from the back part of the oratory to pronounce, in a hollow tone, the word "*forbear*," and immediately a figure glided along by the painted window, which bore the fea-

tures of the absent Count Cesar, and was habited in the usual garb of that cavalier.

The women attendant on the Lady Juliana uttered a shriek, at the appearance of the figure, which was lost to them in an instant; while the Monk Velaschi stood amazed at the supernatural interruption, the Count Montorio flew to the assistance of the Marquis who leaned motionless on the side of the altar, while the hardened and prophane Montaltus insisted that some person was concealed in the chapel, and that the whole was the contrivance of Henry St. Florentin.

The Marquis di Simonetta, however, whose mind was constantly tormented with superstition, had so recognised the features of Don Cesar, that his dread was not to be overcome. It was in vain that Montaltus, an active cripple, pierced through the croud of attendants, and explored every avenue; the appearance was no where to be found.

The holy father waited for the commands of the Marquis; and the Lady Juliana, who had not seen the figure, but had heard the word "*forbear*," believed it to have been uttered by the mysterious STRANGER FRIEND, who had before interposed between danger, for Henry St. Florentin and herself.

The Marquis di Simonetta, notwithstanding all the ridicule of the Prince Vicentio, and the impious expressions of Montaltus, touching the appearance, would not suffer the nuptial rites to proceed; but after the procession had returned to the Castle, dismissed the attendants, and kissing his daughter, said, in a tremulous tone, "the will of heaven must be obeyed, for the present your father will not think of this marriage.

CHAP. II.

By the suggestions of Montorio and Montàltus the Marquis begins to believe that his senses had been imposed on, or that some one had assumed the appearance of his Son.—Henry having received an intimation of the perfidy of Montorio and Montaltus, escapes from the Castle of Cavigno, and travels in the dress of an Armenian Merchant, to see his Sister Celestina.

The Prince Vicentio, though startled, at first, at the extraordinary interruption to his nuptials, was too dissolute and depraved to be at all awakened by it to a sense of shame for having caused such bitter anguish to the unhappy Juliana, and presently joined Montorio and Montaltus in making a mockery of the whole affair before the Marquis di Simonetta, who began to lose already

the impression which the vision had made; in short, such was his dread of predictions, omens, and supernatural appearances that he had gladly embraced the idea, that what had been noticed was some friend of Henry St. Florentin who had contrived to appear in the garb of Count Cesar, and this, by degrees, operated so well in his mind, that he began to speak of fixing the day again for the celebration of the marriage; while Montorio and Montaltus promised to take care that no stranger should enter the chapel during the ceremony; the procession was to be omitted, and one holy father only was to attend; and further, if there was time, the infamous Monk Muscadus was to be sent for to perform the rites.

The Lady Juliana had kept her chamber ever since the mysterious evening of her intended nuptials drooping with sickness, and more in dread of the Prince Vicentio and his parasites than of dreams and visions.

In the mean time a change took place in Henry St. Florentin's affairs; his faithful Nicholas had noticed that a stranger had been about the Castle for some days, carrying a huntsman's spear as if to kill game: Scipio, the spy of Montorio, was afraid of leaving Henry, for he had an inclination, several times, to go out and accost the huntsman. Nicholas had suspected, for some time, that all dispatches, both to and from his master, were constantly opened, and only such delivered to him as did not interfere with the projects of Montorio, and this determined him to see into the business of the stranger, who appeared as if he wished to convey some letter secretly.

At length Nicholas pretended that he wished to go to a vineyard near at hand, where he had made some acquaintance with the daughter of the vintager, but he no sooner left the Castle gate than he began to explore the wood and the vallies, in search of the mysterious

huntsman, who he presently observed, walking, with hasty strides, towards him. The Stranger accosted Nicholas and enquired if he was the Count Montorio's domestic, to which Nicholas replied that he was not. The Stranger then asked if he knew a young neapolitan of the name of Nicholas, which last question surprised him very much; Nicholas answered that he was the man. "Then I may trust you," replied the stranger; "and your much injured master, the generous Henry St. Florentin is here; give him this dispatch as secretly as possible.—It comes from the STRANGER FRIEND.

The huntsman, as he uttered the last words, walked hastily away, and left Nicholas to ponder on the mystery of the stranger's visit and his packet. Nicholas, however, was discreet, and returned to the Castle without being, in the least, suspected, when he soon took occasion to retire to his master's closet, who was exceedingly surprised at the

adventure of the morning, and broke the seal of the dispatch with haste. It was a letter signed the *Stranger Friend,* and contained a complete narrative of the plots of Montorio and his son Montaltus, with an account of the meeting of the council, and the situation of the Lady Juliana.

The astonished Henry St. Florentin could scarcely support the shock which the intelligence gave him; he shuddered as he read, and a sense of its being true came instantly over across his mind; he related what he had read to the faithful Nicholas, and it was immedialy determined that they should escape from the Castle in the evening.

Although the Count St. Florentin was watched by Scipio, yet he was not a prisoner; for the artful Montorio knew that it was by giving him his liberty alone that he could enslave him. Scipio had strict orders, however, to pursue his steps in case he left the Castle,

and, by any means, to prevent him from reaching Milan.

In the evening the honest Nicholas took the horses secretly from the stable, and tied them at a small wood at hand, without being noticed, and then made his master acquainted with the measures which he had taken; but, although they were as cautious as possible, their movements had been observed by Scipio, who, after their flight, discovered that the horses were missing, and calling three of the domestics, bid them mount swift steeds and follow him, who rode on a courser of the Count Montorio's. The Count Henry St. Florentin had already mounted his, as had Nicholas, who had had the precaution to arm himself with a scymitar; they were, however, almost immmediately overtaken by Scipio, who enquired of the Count Henry whether he was going to ride far, and that, as it was so late, he would accompany him for safety; Henry,

with great courtesy, declined, but the well-instructed Scipio still persevered.

At length, Henry, impatient of the controul, observed to Scipio aloud, that he wished for a ride unattended by any but his own servant, he requested, therefore, that he would return to the castle, and trouble himself no further; but the man still followed, until a severe look from Henry compelled him to explain that his orders were to attend the Count wherever he might go. Henry, in a firm tone, replied, that he should not submit to any such controul, and desired to know if he meant to insist on it by force of arms. Scipio answered, that he did, and that three of the Count Montorio's train were at hand.

At hearing the words between the Count St. Florentin and Montorio's attendant, the brave Nicholas was determined at the instant how to act, and rode up to Scipio with such violence, that he immediately unhorsed him, and left him laying for dead in the road,

unable either to speak or to move. The three others of the train had now arrived, and although they had observed their comrade fall from his horse, were unconscious of the real fact, and obeyed the commands of Count Henry to remove the speechless Scipio to the Castle, who, he said, had met with an accident.

Henry now rode as fast as he could, followed by Nicholas, not without fears that the man might recover sufficiently to direct his comrades to pursue them. And which fears were presently realised, as Nicholas observed them following at full speed. Henry put spurs to his horse and would have secured his flight, had it not been for the huntsman whom Nicholas had spoken to and his train who crossed the road. The chief huntsman saluted Henry, saying aloud: "Pursue your journey and leave us to impede your pursuers," when he gallantly spurred his horse, and the whole train followed, when they heard them

holloa to the servants of Montorio to clear the road, who, they observed, obeyed, and drew up to the border of the wood to suffer the train to pass.

The Count Henry was fearful of going to Milan, knowing that that place contained few else than enemies; he determined, therefore, on visiting his sister Celestina, in the convent of Notre Dame of Mont-Carmel and pursued the road to that place, whither he arrived, and found the Lady Celestina a paragon of beauty, and possessed of such sweetness and sensibility that he forgot all his sorrows in her conversation. He was afflicted, however, to observe that the health of the interesting Celestina appeared in a state of decline, and which he was informed by the sisters, had been the case for some time past.

The lovely Celestina, in the purest strain of devotion, entreated her brother to repose all his trust in Providence, and assured him that he might still depend

on having the assistance of the mysterious Stranger Friend wherever he went.

Henry took his leave of his sister the Lady Celestina, who bestowed on him the benediction of our Lady of Mont Carmel.

CHAP. IV.

Henry St. Florentin, disguised as an Armenian Merchant, arrives at Cavigna.—His interview with Lady Juliana.—Is attacked by Prince Vicentio, Montorio and Montaltus.

After Henry St. Florentin had left the Convent of our Lady of Mont-Carmel, he travelled the road towards Vercelli, and in one of the small towns through which he passed, met accidentally with a Jew, from whom he purchased an armenian habit which was so complete a disguise, that it would not have been easy to have discovered him; his faithful Nicholas was also concealed under the dress of a slave attendant on the supposed armenian merchant, and had coloured his face of so natural a dye that he actually appeared a native of India.

On Henry's arrival at Vercelli, he walked along the bank of the river Era, by the side of a wood which was graced with all the scenery of the pine, the cedar and the laburnum.

Nicholas, who was armed with a sabre under his vest, attended his master, as they approached a grove of white mulberry trees, which led immediately to the palace of di Simonetta. Henry rested himself on a marble seat, from whence he had a view of one of the entrances.

The tranquillity which reigned on every side of this delightful spot, was only interrupted by a stream of pellucid water, which run from the overflowing of the canal Domo Dorsola which refreshed the verdure, and by the soft breath of a southern breeze that agitated the beautiful Arbisca and Oleander, while the rich tints of a golden coloured setting sun gave additional brilliancy to the picture, St. Florentin indulged himself in the extacies of an imagi-

nation always awake to the charms of nature—and how superior were his contemplations to the vitiated and depraved enjoyments of the Princes Charles and Vicentio, over exquisite meats and wines, destructive of their own end; and only giving pleasure to give pain.

Henry St. Florentin had not passed more than half an hour in this delightful and rational indulgence, when on a sudden, his contemplations were disturbed by the sound of a voice which penetrated the deepest recesses of his heart and occasioned the most lively transports. He instantly recollected it to be that of Juliana, who was singing a beautiful Italian air, with so much of expression that it added considerably to the emotion which the sound of her voice had occasioned.

After a short pause, Henry thought he heard her repeat his own name. It was "St. Florentin" that she uttered, and on the first impulse he was prompted to throw himself at her feet, but that

impulse he very prudently restrained, fearing that he might alarm her by too abrupt an appearance.

Agitated as was the mind of St. Florentin, he was almost unable to decide how to act for the best, but fearful that she might leave the place he ventured to pronounce her name, and found that it had the effect of arresting her attention, as she turned her face, and observing somebody approach appeared to wait as expecting some extraordinary event. Henry St. Florentin waved his hand and touched his turban, saluting her in the eastern stile with the greatest homage and respect, purposely to dissipate her fears; but on drawing nearer to her she seemed to know him, notwithstanding his disguise, which encouraged him to throw himself at her feet. At this instant the Prince Vicentio, accompanied by Montorio and Montaltus, rushed from the colonade of the palace and made their way to the spot. They were each of them armed, as they had been

some time viewing the stranger in the dress of an armenian, and suspected that it was some stratagem to see the Countess Juliana.

The Count St. Florentin was armed also with his scymitar but which they could not observe, as it was suspended by a chain from his girdle, which was concealed by his cloak. On the approach of his adversaries, who appeared to menace him, Henry drew his sabre and placed himself in a posture of defence. The Count Montorio, who had pistols, fired one of them, but with such precipitation that it missed. The terrified Juliana sunk on the ground, while Henry in an instant rushed on the Count, and with a sudden blow of his scymitar, struck the second pistol, which he held in his left hand, into the air.

The Prince Vicentio and Montaltus now both attacked the Count Henry, who with admirable skill kept them at bay until the approach of his faithful Nicholas, who, though without judg-

ment, possessed so much strength and courage, that he rushed between the play of the swords, and threw the Prince to the ground. Montaltus and Montorio, both disarmed, fled for assistance to the palace, exclaiming, the Prince is murdered.

Henry immediately raised his distrest uliana from the ground, and by the help of some water from the rivulet, restored her to animation; but she was on the point of suffering a relapse when she observed the unfortunate Henry St. Florentin a second time at her feet, her mind filled with the most frightful apprehensions of her father's anger and fears for Henry's safety, who she now, in the most earnest manner, entreated to depart, aud giving him her hand which he eagerly kissed, begged him to go for her sake, to which, however, Henry would not yield, until that she had promised to write to him on the following day, and make him acquainted with the events which might then take place

in the interior of the palace. Henry repeated the direction of the Inn where he meant to sojourn, and bathing her hand with tears, reluctantly retired.

The distrest Juliana, with rapid but trembling steps, made the best of her way to the palace, while Henry, followed by Nicholas, departed for the nearest village or town.

The Prince still lay extended on the ground, and it was some time before the cowardly Montorio and Montaltus could summon domestics and find arms sufficient, as they conceived, to contend with the intrepid St. Florentin and his attendant; when they arrived at the spot, therefore, and found Henry had left the walk, their whole attention was directed to the Prince, for they had met the Countess Juliana in their way. The Marquis di Simonetta was with them.

The Prince Vicentio had only suffered from the violence with which he had

been thrown by the power of the brave Nicholas.

On the next day Henry received a letter, left by a stranger at the inn where he had sojourned. It was from the Signora Ammirato, in whose mind a considerable alteration had taken place since the appearance of the figure of Count Cesar. The Signora was as superstitious as the Marquis, and she retained the impression, not having the like stratagems of impiety at work against her as affected the change in the opinion of her master. She believed that it was a supernatural appearance: she had seen it, and had heard the solemn interdiction, "*forbear*;" she believed, therefore, that it was the interposition of heaven, and that the Prince Vicentio was not destined to make her mistress happy. The letter was as follows:

"Count St. Florentin,

"My regard for my beloved mistress, the Countess Juliana, and the confi-

dence she has impressed on my mind, of your honour, together with the pressing necessity of something being immediately done to prevent new dangers to a cavalier who is worthy of a better fortune, induce me to make you acquainted with the occurrences which took place after the dreadful rencontre of yesterday, and of what we have since determined.

"After the Lady Juliana had left you, she was seized with the most frightful terrors at the noise and tumult which she heard at the palace, and with seeing her father with a drawn sword in his hand, running across the garden with the Counts Montorio and Montaltus, followed by all the domestics, expecting to find you with my lady. Happily, at the moment, she passed through the mulberry grove, and was observed by them, who then directed all their attention to the Prince Vicentio. The Lady Juliana came by a colonade behind the palace to my apartment. I saw that

she was in agony, and clasped her in my arms; when she related to me all that had happened. What follows was related to us by one of her women. As soon as the Counts Montorio and Montaltus arrived at the door of the palace, they called out to the Marquis and told him, almost out of breath, their rencontre with you, disguised as an Armenian merchant, which they did in a manner the most indulgent to themselves. They stated that they had surprised the Lady Juliana with you, in earnest conversation; that you being armed and they without arms, you attempted to murder them; that they, nevertheless, made a vigorous resistance, and would have succeeded in securing you if your servant had not come to your assistance; that they had judged it prudent to go to the castle for their swords, as well as to acquaint the Marquis with the situation in which they had left his daughter and the Prince Vicentio.

"From such representations of the

wicked Montorio and Montaltus, the fury of the Marquis was so dreadful that he snatched his sword in an instant, assembled his domestics, and ordered them to prevent, if possible, your escape from the grounds belonging to the palace; but the time which expired in these preparations, and the road which you took put you, without doubt, soon out of the reach of their pursuit. The anger and resentment of the Marquis became more violent, when he found the search to be ineffectual, and as soon as he returned he went to Lady Juliana's apartment, happily he did not find her, being advertised of her danger by the tumult of his approach, I contrived to secrete her in one of the attendant's rooms, thinking that if he did not find her in her own he would most likely go to mine, which, indeed, happened as I expected.

"I was never more terrified, not even at the appearance of Count Cesar at the oratory of the chapel, which I shall

never forget; it was that circumstance which first made me your friend, for I then saw that heaven was against the marriage of my Lady with the Prince Vicentio. The unhappy Marquis, prevailed on by the Counts Montorio and Montaltus, believed that you had committed the greatest outrage, and being disappointed of the object of his vengeance, he appeared ready to wreak it upon his daughter, my dear Lady Juliana, if she had come in his way.

"In this temper the Marquis uttered the most bitter imprecations, still instigated by the two Counts, who had followed him all over the palace.

"I did not think it prudent to oppose the Marquis in the height of his resentment, and preserved a profound silence and appearance of tranquillity.

"As I knew the Marquis's impetuosity of temper, and, at the same time, the goodness of his heart, whenever he should be permitted to act from its dic-

tates, after the first effects of his rage were over, I ventured to address myself to him, and said, 'Sir, I have some particular information to communicate, which may help to calm your passion, but it must be when we are alone.'

"The Marquis di Simonetta, feeling nothing so dreadful as the situation in which he fancied his honor was placed, and being unable to obtain relief without me, requested the Counts Montorio and Montaltus to withdraw.

"I begun with entreating the Marquis to hear me with patience; who uttering a broken sigh, which only shewed the stifled remains of resentment, and leaning his face on his right hand, looked at me with a fixed attention, as much as to say, 'speak on, I will hear you, if possible, with the patience you require.' I assured him that the interview had been, on the part of my dear lady, purely accidental, and that she had not foreseen the event in any manner

whatever, and that she would have left you if she had the power which had been denied her, by her strength failing with terror at the rencontre. I told him that she was ignorant of your intention to visit that spot, I was heard with condescension, and I thought it was now time to hint that the Counts Montorio and Montaltus were interested in the marriage of the Prince Vicentio with my mistress, and which made them urge any thing they could against you. The observation seemed to displease him; he had fixed his mind on the grand alliance, as he always called it; he looked angrily, and withdrew without opening his lips.

"Indeed, I fear very much that the Marquis will immediately compel my dear lady to the espousal with the Prince Vicentio, unless something may be done to prevent it. I have thought it best, therefore, for the future happiness of my dear Lady, and of the

Marquis himself, that she should leave Cavigno this night, and place herself under the protection of the Count di Barlemont, at Milan; she will be there, surrounded by friends, and I will accompany her: it is a strong measure, but my dear Lady's inclinations must not be forced, she shall not be dragged to the altar again." I see that heaven forbids that she should marry a libertine.

"These are the circumstances which the Lady Juliana has desired me to communicate, not doubting of your prudence and willingness to conform to her wishes in this respect; she desired me to add, at the same time, that she hopes you will not refuse her request, that you will immediately on receipt of this letter, depart from Vercelli, and travel, for a time, wherever your inclination may lead, until more favorable circumstances may arise; and that you may wait patiently, as she does, the determination of heaven; that she will never

act contrary to the will of her father, but that she will never espouse the Prince Vicentio, but I must say no more;—she leaves the Palace to-night, without her father's consent, to save him from the bitter remorse he would suffer at seeing his daughter lay dead at the foot of the altar. I am, with the highest respect, and the truest affection, your friend.

"MARGARITTA AMIRATTO."

When Henry St. Florentin received the above letter, which advertised him of the intended departure of the Countess Juliana, he consulted with his faithful Nicholas how to contrive to speak to her once more, before he obeyed her commands in leaving that part of Italy. Nicholas proposed that he should go to a friend of his, and borrow the dresses of muleteers, and that then they would go as not only une

along the bank of the canal, as doubtless some one of the domestics would be entrusted to bring mules to the Palace at night, and that, if they saw any one who they guessed might be going on that errand, they should offer their services ;—which scheme Henry highly approved.

CHAP. IV.

The Muleteers.

On the return of Nicholas, who had succeeded in obtaining a muleteer's habit, the Count St. Florentin went out with him towards the Palace, and on the road met an Italian boy, who called to them, asking if they were not muleteers. Nicholas answered yes, and the lad, without farther ceremony, told them his errand, and that they would be wanted, with their mules, at the western gate of the Palace, at the supper hour. Henry promised to be punctual, and they returned to the village, where they bought some mules ready caparisoned, and had them in readiness for night. Nicholas not only under-

stood how to manage them, but was also perfectly acquainted with the road.

When the moon had risen, and the stillness of the evening announced, that it approached nearly to the hour fixed on; Henry and his faithful Nicholas drove their mules, as had been ordered, to the Western gate, and they presently observed two ladies and a boy, gliding gently through the colonade, not a word was spoken, and Henry had the pleasure of placing his adored Juliana in her seat.

The Signora Amiratto had contrived it so, that the Marquis and the Counts Montorio and Montaltus were engaged at supper when they left the Palace; the Lady Juliana had retired, and the Prince Vicentio still remained ill in bed.

Nicholas led the mules, while Henry St. Florentin attended at the side of the Countess Juliana; not a word had been said, and they proceeded silently along the bank of the Domo-dorsola;

the moon shone, and a gentle breath of wind, from the South bore, on its particles, the perfume of the orange, the jessamine, and Arabian heath. Juliana, amidst her terrors, could not resist saying, to the Signora Amiratto, "how delightful!" Henry involuntarily answered, "yes;" the Lady Juliana continued the conversation: "but I believe that the road is not so pleasant a few leagues further, pray tell us muleteer?" "There is a change of scene, certainly madam," replied Henry, "but it is only from the soft and serene landscape, to the rough mountain, and from smooth peaceful waters, to the torrent of the Mincio." "Good Heavens, what is it I hear?" exclaimed Juliana, "this is not the language of a muleteer, and it is the voice of St. Florentin." "It is so, indeed, my Juliana," replied the Count, "but you cannot be safer than under my protection; my faithful Nicholas was brought

up a muleteer, he knows every road and path, and we shall take you safe into the City of Milan—forgive me this enterprise, it was to see you once more, and then I will obey your commands and seek my fortunes in another country.

The Lady Juliana could not refrain from blaming Henry for his temerity and the danger to which he had exposed himself; to which the Count St. Florentin replied, that, as he was about to leave her, perhaps, for ever, he could not resist the opportunity that had offered of seeing her once more, and of bidding a last adieu to her, to whom he had consecrated his life; that his affection was too well founded, for any person living, or any events, to disturb its course or diminish its strength; that, having fulfilled his wish, his departure would be less painful, if he might carry with him the assurance that he was not an object of her dislike. The Lady Juliana sighed as Henry spoke the last

sentence. " To what purpose, Cavalier," she replied, " would it be for me to own that your mind, your person, and your manners please me, since it is scarcely possible that we can ever meet again ; my destiny will be a convent,—ah ! Count, combat this love of yours, as I——— ; she stopped, but the enraptured Henry caught the broken sentence, and love completed it its own way. Henry took the hand of the fair Juliana, and kissed it ; she did not withdraw it, and the mule, as if conscious that his efforts were not desired, walked as slowly as could be wished a considerable way behind the honest beast who carried the Signora Amiratto, and who had no other business to attend to than his journey. The Lady Juliana, overcome by the softness and tranquillity of the scene, and by a croud of sentiments, all favorable to her lover, said, " Count St. Florentin, I will not be so uncandid as to deny that your

attentions are pleasing to me, and I will not hesitate to declare, in the sincerity of my heart, that it is with the most painful apprehension that I conjure you to part from this part of Italy; you may rest assured that you shall have intelligence of me, from Signora Amiratto, who will be so kind as to inform me of your welfare,—fly for the present, from the adversity which attend us.

Henry St. Florentin, elated with the frank acknowledgment of his beloved Juliana, again kissed her hand in rapture, and promised faithfully to obey her, and that point being settled to his satisfaction, the poor mule, who seemed to have been as contemplative as the lovers, was urged to proceed a little faster, when the travellers joined each other, and the Signora had the wisdom to spare herself the trouble of enquiring into the delay of their companions.

Nicholas so well performed his duty,

that his illustrious travellers were far on their road before the Countess was missed from the Palace of Cavigno.

The Marquis di Simonetta was outrageous, when the flight of his daughter from the palace was known, and means were instantly taken for pursuit.

The Prince Vicentio was some weeks before he recovered his strength, when he received a dispatch from the Count of Mantua, with the commands of the Duke, that he should return to that capital.

CHAP. V.

Of the Princess Gabriella.

DURING the time of the occurrences at the Palace of Cavigno, the City of Milan was engaged in the festivities of the carnival, on which occasion the Princess Gabriella was shewn to the people in a grand open *Carrosse*, drawn by four black mules, with gilt harness.

The beauty and condescension of the Princess Gabriella, had attracted the love of the people of Milan; and, when they heard her speak the language of affection towards them, and beheld her mind in her fine eyes, sparkling with intelligence, they were occupied with admiration, and already contemplated the period when she might reign over them the glory and pride of Italy.

The Princess Gabriella had, though young, a considerable share of charac-

ter; there was no tameness nor insipidity, her spirit was high and a grandeur of mind was visible in every action, and which seemed as if designed to govern. She was, nevertheless, full of sensibility, and, in the midst of all her pride and parade, the Princess Gabriella listened, with an attentive and anxious care, to the cries of humanity.

The gaiety and amusement of the carnival gave opportunity to the Princess Gabriella to display the generosity of her disposition, and the churches of Saint Maria de la Scala, of Saint Rosa, and of the Doma, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, were filled with the charitable offerings of bread of the Princess, for the poor of the city. The Dome of the Virgin Mary, whose rich and magnificent gothic architecture is cloathed with the finest marble, and which was founded by the Duke John Galeaso, presents, to the admiring traveller, one-hundred-and-sixty columns, of such dimensions, that it would take

three men to embrace a single one of them; and, in different parts, were distributed six-hundred statues of marble, among the most excellent of which was that of Adam, and of Saint Bartholomew flayed alive—the workmanship of Christopholus Cibro.

The oratory was ornamented with bas-relief, of the most exquisite workmanship, representing the Passions.—Two magnificent organs were in the niches, and two rich sacristies, filled with the most precious ornaments, and decorated with silver, astonished the traveller; while a statue, of the same pure metal, of Saint Charles Borromeus, Archbishop of Milan, still more excited the curiosity; under a dome, in a case of chrystal, of inestimable value, lay the body of the Saint.

The body of the church of the Virgin Mary contained the tombs of several of the Dukes of Milan, of Jacques de Medicis, Marquis of Marignan, brother of Pius the IVth, who was repre-

sented by a statue, in the attitude of kneeling.

The venerable ritual of the divine official was performed in the church of the Virgin Mary, with the utmost splendour, by a numerous chapter, and the Princess Gabriella was punctual in her attendance, showing to the people of Milan, at once, an illustrious example, and the bounty of magnificence.

The Prince Vicentio would, perhaps, have gladly looked to an affiance with the Royal Daughter of the Prince Charles; but, however little the latter Prince might esteem virtue in himself, he had that high pride of grandeur, which imagines that every thing related to it by ties of blood must be pure and excellent; he was, therefore, delighted with the character of the Princess Gabriella, and would have judged her worthy even of the hand of the Emperor Charles, and, at all events, of an allegiance equal to that of the Prince of Mantua, and with a better man; for

it is seldom that those who are addicted to the same passions and profligacies as others, admire or approve them, but rather lament them in themselves, and feel a disgust for them in others, except in those seasons when they enter into the drunken fellowships of riot and excess.

CHAP. VI.

The Count St. Florentin travels into Bohemia, sees a celebrated Hermit in the Forest.—A Discovery of consequence.

THE Count St. Florentin complied strictly with the wishes of the Lady Juliana, and set out on his travels with the honest Nicholas. The season of the year was delightful, and the part of Bohemia, whither Henry had chosen to retire, was the most pleasant of that fertile country: it was, indeed, solitary and romantic, but, in that respect, better suited to the state of mind, which he was in, and which sought for solitude and silence.

The Count St. Florentin, during his exile, happened to wander, one day, into the deep recess of a wood; led by curiosity to tread a path scarcely visible through the pasturage, but which con-

ducted him to the centre of a vast forest, the dwelling of a hermit, celebrated for his piety and learning.

As the Count Henry approached he beheld the holy man seated on a bench, engaged in perusing a large volume placed on a stump of a tree, at the door of his hermitage. He arose at the view of a stranger, gave Henry his benediction, and invited him within his abode, which was clean and neat, while a frugal repast of fruit, bread, and the pure water of the spring, was offered to refresh the traveller.

It was not long before the hermit became delighted with the company of his young guest, and seemed to be engaged to perfect confidence, he enquired of many particulars of great personages in the Court of Milan, particularly of the family of Trivulsi; when, learning that it had become extinct, his countenance appeared to brighten, as at some event of consequence to his peace, and which engaged him to disclose to Henry

that he was himself one of the nobles of Milan, that he had engaged in a combat and killed one of the royal house of Trivulsi, in a quarrel which he had not sought on his own account, but in the protection of injured innocence, and to oppose cruel oppression exerted against an unfortunate Lady; that he had been obliged to seek refuge in Germany, where his misfortunes did not end, but that he had married a princess against the will of her father, that their child had been taken from them, and himself and his lady banished, that he had made his escape, and had lived in seclusion many years, and that the house of his determined enemies, the Trivulsi's, being extinct, he was at liberty to return to Milan; that the Marquis di Simonetta was not the elder of that house, and that he was himself the Marquis, but that the Prince had conferred that title on his brother also, in his absence. —Henry St. Florentin no sooner learnt

that the man who appeared before him was the Marquis di Simonetta, and the uncle of his Juliana, than he knelt and kissed his hand, avowing his love for that lady, and entreating his friendship and protection.

The Marquis listened with attention to the narrative of St. Florentin, and at the conclusion, gave him the strongest assurances of regard, and that nothing should be left undone, to prevail on his brother to consent to the alliance. The Marquis, although so long an exile, knew many of the occurrences which had passed in his family, and was well acquainted with the infamous characters of Montorio and Montaltus.

The Marquis advised Henry St. Florentin to return to Milan, and immediately to appeal to the Prince Charles and the council of the realm, and to do it openly, without the least disguise, and that he would follow him thither, and second his application, but that, for

the present, his secret should be preserved from every body except his wife, the Princess di Stalma.

The Count St. Florentin did not hesitate to follow the advice of the Marquis, and made immediate preparations to visit his own country.

CHAP. VII.

The Prince Charles gives a grand Entertainment in Milan. The Marchesina Amphilisia Jealous of the Lady Laurenta di Volturna.—Of the Princess Andreolla.

THE Prince Charles was so great an epicure in form and feature, and was so well attended to in his desires, that he constantly required and was indulged in a fresh display of the most tempting objects the city of Milan could afford. The active Margotus had considerable skill in his selections, and wit as well as beauty were expected as introductions to the table of the Royal Libertine.

The Marchesina Amphilisia still held the dominion over the mind of the Prince, but she was too good a judge not to suffer the royal appetite to be indulged with the company of women

of less attractions than herself, that she might become the more distinguished in the comparison; not any, however, were admitted, with her consent, who might present a superior display of beauty or of brilliancy.

The Prince Vicentio, however, who had been invited to the grand carousal of the Prince Charles, and who was desired to bring a favorite, was so pleased with the Lady Laurenta's skill, as he believed it, in seducing Henry St. Florentin from the Lady Juliana, and which mischief, he had reason to think, had met with success, that he asked her to accompany him to the palace of the Prince Charles.

The entertainment of the Prince was prepared in a grand apartment of the palace, open to a corridor. It was superb and sumptuous. The sun had set, and left behind a soft voluptuous heat that produced the most dangerous languor; every object of nature appeared from the galleries to partake of the same

disposition, the birds sung sweetly, and on the gentle zephyr of the evening was borne the excessive odours of the scented rue, the eringo, the lavender and the tree heath, while the smell of the pines and fruit from the table of the Prince assisted the fragrance.

Sweet dulcet music was playing in the gardens, beneath, with such delightful harmony that the empassioned bosom thrilled with extacy.

The Lady Amphilisia was seated on the right of the Prince Charles when the Prince Vicentio entered, accompanied by the Lady Laurenta di Volturna, adorned in the most elegant attire, and displaying the profuseness of her charms. The ladies received each other with the most studied courtesy, but a side glance of disdain would have been visible to any but themselves.

The Prince Charles seemed dedicated entirely to the Marechesina, and the repast concluded without any extraordinary occurrence.

After, however, that the Princes had drunken plentifully of the Italian wines, coffee and sherbet were brought in by the attendants, and as it is not the custom of Italy for the ladies to retire, they gave fresh delights to the enchantments of the evening. The Prince Vicentio invited the Lady Laurenta di Volturna to play and sing, when she immediately took a lute in her hand, and made such soft and voluptuous cadences, that the Prince Charles who leant back on a couch in the corridor, at the side of the Lady Amphilisia, seemed awakened to attention, but he was not aware, nor was the Lady Amphilisia aware, of the magic which was to follow. The Lady Laurenta rose from her seat with the lute, held gracefully in her hand, and paraded the saloon before the Prince Charles, singing and playing the love of Alexander for Thais. The Prince Charles was amazed, his eye moved only as the object of his admiration moved, and the fascination

was so compleat, that the Marchesina Amphilisia discovered her danger, her bosom beating with alarm, and her eyes sparkling with the fire of anger and jealousy.

The Lady Laurenta, secure of her conquest, was yet desirous of further triumph; she struck the strings of the lute with passion and transport—the sound was obedient to her touch. The Prince Charles rose from his couch, and at the finest of the cadence led her gallantly to her seat, kissing her hand with extacy and adoration.

The Marchesina Amphilisia rose also, but it was to retire with a haughty and majestic air; disregarded, however, by the royal libertine, who had seated himself next to the Lady Laurenta, and was listening to the music of her voice uttering the most brilliant replies of a highly cultivated understanding. The Prince Vicentio looked on, but without jealousy, he was desirous of paying his homage to the Marchesina, and sought

her in her room, where he raised her indignation against the Prince by exaggerating every circumstance. The offended Marchesina spoke of the aqua tufana for her rival, of the bravoes and of the stiletto. The Prince Vicentio, however, hinted at the inconstancy of the Prince Charles; that the charms of her manners were greatly superior to the studied action of the Lady Laurenta, and such consequence had his adulation, that the enraged Amphilesia returned to the room, led by the Prince Vicentio, to the great relief of the Prince Charles, who desired the result—so frequently does the rage of the imbecile produce only the completion of the mischief which it dreads.

Strange as it may appear to the humble or ignorant, such are the refinements of state and grandeur, that the affections of the mind are disregarded, or shunned as irksome obstacles to enjoyment. The lustre of the royal diadem must not be dimmed by the breath of

expostulation or advice; and the inconstancies or adulteries of Princes, triumphing over the habits of virtue, or of conjugal and domestic reason, are pursued without restraint or shame, and denominated the accustomed gallantries of courts. Thus it was the Lady Andreolla had been long neglected, and lived in a solitude, so far happy as it was removed from the abominations of the palace of Trezza. The intrigues of the wicked had been early at work to destroy the influence of the Lady Andreolla, and had been but too successful. Yet there was a bond which it was not in the power of the worst enemies to dissolve. The Princess Gabriella encreased in glory with her stature, and shone from the Court of Milan like a bright star full of virtue and happy influence, to bless and adorn a nation.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Lady Juliana di Simonetta.

After the escape of the Lady Juliana was known at the palace of Cavigna, the Marquis, distracted, and apprehensive that the Count St. Florentin had carried her away, was on the point of pursuing her steps, when a dispatch arrived from the Countess di Barlemont, assuring him of the safety of his daughter, and acquainting him that she was under her protection, and so ill that, for some time at least, all idea of the intended solemnization taking place between her and the Prince Vicentio must cease; at the same time declaring, in the most sacred manner, that the Count St. Florentin had left Milan, and that in case of his return, she would write to request that he would not visit at the palace of Barlemont.

The Marquis di Simonetta, somewhat appeased, determined in his own mind to wait the ingenuity of Montorio and Montaltus to effect the destruction of the Count St. Florentin, who were anxious enough, on their parts, to accomplish the object, as they were informed that the Count had appealed to the council to disannul the settlement by which they were made his heirs.

The Lady Juliana suffered the most dreadful anxieties at the palace of Barlemont. The Prince Vicentio, who had visited the Countess di Barlemont, had given that lady such proofs from the lips of the servants of Lady Laurenta, of St. Florentin's visits at *L'Isola d'Amori*, that she could no longer question the fact, and with the best intentions divulged the whole affair to the Lady Juliana, but although the intelligence depressed her spirits and overcame her with regret, it did not advance, in the smallest degree, the interests of the Prince Vicentio; all that the Lady Ju-

liana thought was that every man was alike a libertine. She was sensible that the noble mind of St. Florentin had been subjected to the allurements of a courtezan, yet was not without hopes that, on explanation, she might find his character unsullied and his heart the same as ever. She judged it prudent, however, to show that resentment which is meant rather to bless and guard those who are loved, than to visit them with anger or indignation.

One circumstance appeared very much in favor of St. Florentin, which was that the circumstances detailed to her must have taken place before her meeting with him at Cavigno, and that since that time he had left the Milanese. "May," said she, "the breast of St. Florentin be unpolluted by the stains of deliberate and determined vice."

CHAP. IX.

Henry St. Florentin returns to Milan, and appeals openly to Prince Charles.—Is arrested by order of the Council, and is released by the mysterious interference of the Stranger Friend.—Montorio and Montaltus become alarmed at the extraordinary power which thwarts their designs.

HENRY St. Florentin took leave of his kind friend, the elder Marquis di Simonetta, who had felt for him with more than common feeling, as he had been himself the victim of oppression in two instances, and the last nearly resembling the situation of the Count.

Henry returned to Milan, and took up his lodging in one of the principal hotels, in the name of the Count St. Florentin, having previously sent a dispatch to the Prince Charles; his return

was presently spread abroad, and reached the ears of Montorio and Montaltus.

These determined enemies of St. Florentin determined, however, that he should be arrested under the order which was still in force against him, and he was, the next day after his arrival, visited by the guard, who presented him the order of his detention, which was instantly complied with on his part, and he was immediately conveyed to the citadel.

Henry had not been an hour in the citadel, before the doors of his room were thrown open, and presented to him the Stranger in the Red Mantle, accompanied by the centinel, who told him that he was at liberty to depart. Henry felt an extraordinary tumult of mind at these sudden vicissitudes, and would have asked the Stranger, who appeared to possess such unlimited power, to explain the mystery in which it was involved, but that was not allowed him, for he was gone from his sight in an in-

stant, and the soldier either could not or did not chuse to say any thing on the subject.

Henry was no sooner without the walls of his prison, than he walked through the streets of Milan, where he met the Count Molina, who told him that he had heard of his liberation, and that he hoped he would be able to exculpate himself from the charges, whenever the Prince Charles might chuse to hear the appeal. Henry was met also by Montorio and Montaltus, who affected to be very well pleased at his release, and pretended that they had not known him in the disguise of an Armenian Merchant; but Henry, although of the best natural disposition, was not to be imposed on any longer, he turned, therefore, aside, saying: "Cavaliers, I am safe, while I consider you my enemies!" Montorio was enraged at the reply, and both he and Montaltus swore to be revenged; in addition to which sentiment, their apprehensions

and alarm at the extraordinary interference which perplexed and rendered their plans abortive, made them devise a fatal blow at the life of the noble St. Florentin.

The Marquis di Simonetta was at his palace at Cavigno, so that from him Montorio could not obtain assistance in his views, if that noble had been base enough to join in the dreadful scheme; but the truth was that the Marquis, with all his faults, would have disdained even to have listened for an instant to a project of assassination; his mind was above mean and cowardly advantage, and if he had not been blinded by pride and ambition, he would have already seen through the arts of Montorio and Montaltus, who were thus left to plan together their last and strongest expedient.

Montorio, however, had not neglected to inform Prince Charles of the liberation of Henry St. Florentin, and received a dispatch in answer, saying that

the Prince had not given commands to that effect. A cavalier arrived in haste at the citadel, his enquiries were kept perfectly secret, they terminated, however, in his abrupt return to the Prince Charles, when the affair dropt altogether, and not the least notice was taken of St. Florentin, who walked the streets of Milan as usual.

CHAP. X.

Henry is attacked by Assassins, on the borders of the Canal de la Rosa, near the Forest of Novarra.—The Stranger Friend.

It was the constant practice of the Count Henry St. Florentin to walk, after the supper hour, on the banks of the Rosa, to indulge his contemplations in the serene repose of the night—of this habit Montaltus was well informed.

One evening, when the sun had withdrawn its beams altogether from the horizon, and scarcely a vestige of the twilight remained, lingering as it were, to yield its feeble power to the moon, Henry St. Florentin wandered alone towards the forest of Novarra: he had not perceived that night had already begun to enwrap the beautiful landcape of nature in its dusky veil, and

was engaged in reviewing the principal extraordinary events of his life, when he was awakened from his reverie by the voices of men in earnest discourse, and which seemed to proceed from the borders of the forest, when presently the sounds ceased all at once, and were succeeded by a shrill whistle proceeding from the same spot.

However Henry St. Florentin might have disregarded the sound of the voices near him, the suspicious signal which he heard, would have been enough to have put him on his guard, had he had time to defend himself; but, unhappily, that was not allowed him; three villains, masked, rushed from the thickest part of the wood, and attacked him with the most brutal ferocity.

The natural courage and skill of Henry would have been sufficient to have protected him against these bravoes, but he was totally unarmed, and would have been overpowered had not providence interfered in a signal man-

ner. The chief of them fired a carabine on his approach, but to his astonishment it was directed at one of the assassins, who fell instantly to the ground exclaiming—"*Oh, father, you have killed your son.*" On which the chief bravo turned about with the third at his side, and attacked Henry St. Florentin, who had snatched the sword from the hand of the dying bravo, and now stood on his defence. The power of the chief bravo was great, and he bore down on Henry with such matchless strength and skill, that it could scarcely be withstood, when a strange cavalier, well mounted, gallopped across the plain, which led to the forest, followed by a trooper on horseback, and immediately attacked the assassins, who fled precipitately to the thickest of the wood, and disappeared.

The cavalier now turned to Henry, and requested permission to see him safely to the gates of Milan. Henry returned thanks to his brave friend,

and entreated that he would tell him to whom he had owed his deliverance. "I am," said the cavalier, "The Stranger Friend; the same who has before interfered to preserve you from your enemies. I know them and you; but for the present, my name must remain secret; it is for your good that it should be so; be discreet, and you shall yet overcome: I claim your secrecy for the sake of your Juliana." With these words the strange cavalier, seeing Henry near the public walk to the city, set spurs to his horse, and left Henry St. Florentin amazed at the occurrences of another day.

Henry had not proceeded far on the road to Milan, before he was overtaken by some peasants, who returning home across the forest, had seen the latter part of the attack, and were met by Montorio, who acquainted them that he and his son, Montaltus, had been attacked by bravoes, headed by the Count St. Florentin, and that his son, Count Mon-

taltus, had fallen by their hands. The peasants, on this representation, set out immediately in pursuit of Henry St. Florentin, and as the moon shone forth very bright at the time, easily discerned him walking towards the gates of the city; when one of the peasants bluntly accused him of the murder, and called to several passengers to assist him in taking him into custody. Henry had the presence of mind to surrender himself instantly to them, and stated that they were deceived; that it was himself who had been attacked, and that he must have fallen, if a strange cavalier had not have come to his assistance. Henry was immediately conducted to the prison of the citadel, and the story was presently current, that he had attempted the assassination of the Count Montorio, and had completed that of Montaltus, which was partly corroborated by the peasants, who only judged from the impressions which they had received from what they had seen.

And now when the unfortunate Henry St. Florentin reflected on all the circumstances of the attempt at his assassination and the result, he was convinced that the wicked Montorio had it very much in his power to destroy him, for scarcely a circumstance could appear in his favor.

CHAP. XI.

The Prince engages in fresh Intrigues. The almost fatal termination of one of them.

An opportunity occurred about the time of the departure of the Prince Vicentio, for the Prince Charles to pursue his intrigues without the chance of rivalship from his brother libertine. It happened that a lady arrived in Milan, of prodigious beauty, she was called the Countess di Palma, and was a celebrated devotee, apparently the most pious, and at the same time the most uncharitable of that class.—She was on a visit to the Marchesina Matilda di Podesta, who resided a few miles from the capital, and the Prince no sooner heard of her beautiful guest than he sent an intimation of his Royal intention to visit the Marchesina and stop a few weeks.

The preparations were accordingly made, and the Prince arrived at the Palace at Podesta, but the fair Lady Palma was, or pretended to be, indisposed.—She was confined to her chamber, and the disappointed Prince was compelled, for some days, to pass his evenings in the company of the Marchesina, who had also considerable attractions.

The Lady Palma was attended by a little hypocrite, called Mula, who practised the like character with her mistress exactly contrary to her nature and disposition; she was fair, delicate, had very fine eyes, a charming bosom, an exceeding good leg, and a mind full of mischief and intrigue.

The fortune of the Countess di Palma was much too small to give any sanguine hopes of a grand alliance, and her pride was so great that it had caused her to reject the proposals that had been made her in the early part of her life. The disappointed Lady Palma had given

up her person to the superior of a certain convent where she had been immured for some years.—Some pecuniary matters she said had prevented her from taking the veil, but her virtue appeared to be as secure from her torpid insensible constitution as if she had been really a Nun ; she was a stranger to the softness of her nature from the severity of habit. In one of those prisons she had obtained, by her exemplary conduct, almost the character of the saint after whom she was named ; her great ambition consisted in procuring the admiration given to unspotted virtue, the adulation of Priests, and her chief employment was that of making converts.

Such was the character of the Countess di Palma, her person was more natural more beautiful and more attractive. She was rather tall, her shape slender and delicate, her eyes sleepy and languishing, her complexion fair beyond description, her hair very long

and of the finest auburn, her full bosom concealed by an almost impervious assemblage of muslin, as impatient at such beauties being hid, seemed to swell with indignation; she was in her age past the verge of thirty, and midnight watchings, and penance had not deprived her of a single charm which nature had bestowed.

The unexpected arrival of the Prince would have thrown almost any woman but the discreet di Palma into a perplexity. That lady had, however, pretended an indisposition, as soon as she had heard of his arrival, purposely to give her time to act the part which she determined to perform.

After a few mornings, the Lady Palma ventured to appear; the Marchesina held her tenderly by the hand and introduced her like a timid virgin to the Royal Libertine, whose eyes were feasted with a display of fascination without the least apparent glance of observation; she modestly bowed her head, her eyes

seemingly fixed on the ground, and her thoughts evidently abstracted from every thing round her.

The Prince dwelt on the charms of the lady with admiration, and instantly made his resolutions to overcome her scruples, while she at the same moment made hers that he should do so if he would pay handsomely for his victory.

The Lady Palma was dressed in black, the cross of St. Olivola was suspended from her bosom. She played off her favorite character and was, by turns, gentle, humble, and discreet; the Prince on his part, discovered what he had to do to please, he was also gentle, humble, and discreet, he retained nothing of the Prince but its politeness, he seemed to acknowledge her *his* sovereign, and appeared lost in the abstraction of her charms. Thus, by making himself of less consequence, he acquired more, and by degrees the affected reserve of the lady seemed to abate; he had managed to express a well dissem-

bled melancholy which engaged her complacency and esteem.

Margotus, who had accompanied the Prince, had made the same dispositions; to overcome the companion of the Lady Palma, the little Mula, but he had occasion to use his arts, only for a very short time, for *himself*, though the victory was of a great moment to his master.

The Lady Palma, after a few days of reserve, ventured at some instants to interchange a glance with the Prince, but which she always withdrew the instant she had time for recollection, and so pious and modest were they that the voluptuous Prince Charles began already to despair.

The Prince, from the advice of Margotus, began now to assume more spirit, and gallantry, but he found that rapid advances would not succeed with the Lady di Palma, he endeavoured therefore to awaken her attention at the dinners and suppers, by tales of sensibility,

and of distress, and to those she was compelled, by her assumed character, to listen to, but it was silently or with a sigh ; at other times she appeared totally abstracted.—If the Prince spoke of her charms or of love, she seemed to retire instantly as alarmed at the danger, and to fortify herself with all the powers of her virtue, and profession.

Shall I, said the Prince, one night to his favorite Margotus, after a week's fruitful experiment, shall I attempt this woman or not. The pursuit will absent me perhaps from the pleasures and dissipations of Milan, and from more easy and agreeable intrigue. The ingenious Margotus, however, who had not yet accomplished his own views, on the favorite *Mula* persuaded the Prince to continue his endeavours to obtain the prize, and the next morning a letter arrived just in time to confirm that resolution. It was

from the Lady di Victoria, who had longed for an opportunity of making her peace. It was as follows:—

" My dear Prince,

" I rejoice at your being *si bien situé*, where I sincerely wish you to remain for a short time for your own pleasure, and my complete gratification; you have an excellent subject at Podesta, newly arrived, as I hear, I mean the discreet and dangerous hypocrite, the Lady di P——; I know her, she is wanton, deceitful, ostentatious, avaricious, and vindictive; many of our young nobles have bid high for the prize, but she, my Prince, seems as inanimate as a mummy; you will delight me if you can humble this pretended Saint, we all hate her; but I believe her ruin will be now complete; she will not be able to withstand the brilliancy of the manners,

the address, the courtesy, the gallantry of my *Prince*, my *Sultan*.

" Farewell,

" Yours, for ever,

" VICTORIA."

The Prince, immediately on reading this letter, sent for his favorite, Margotus, who was closeted with him for some time in forming the necessary arrangements which were now to be made in consequence of the information they had received. " Prince, cried the ready Margotus, the Countess di Palma will cost you something; you had better send instantly to Milan for some precious diamonds, and pearls; her charms deserve a price, and I leave you to judge how much. You will see; after one present or more, whether she relaxes from her rigid demeanor. If she does, the work will be a sum in arithmetic. If she does not, other means must be tried. I will bribe the little Mula also, I have discovered her al-

ready." The Prince was delighted with the advice of his favorite, and one of the principal jewellers in Milan was sent to, to furnish the intended allurements. In the mean time Margotus, with love and money, urged the lively little Mula so successfully that she threw off *her* restraint and became the chief engine of his intrigues. She informed him, among other secrets, that her mistress visited a small retired plantation, a little distance from the Palace, in the cool of the evenings, for purpose of the meditation.

The next night the Prince Charles *happened* to wander to the same spot, and it was not long before he met her in one of the least frequented walks; she was standing with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her beautiful taper fingers employed in counting the beads of a handsome rosary: as soon as she perceived the approach of the Prince, she affected to fancy him a stranger, and leaning back on a seat that was near

her she shrunk, as with apprehension, and dissembled an extremity of alarm. The Prince approached, respectfully, and assured her of his protection.—The Lady Palma bowed, timidly. "You are fond of retirement, madam," said he, "and to persons of your soft and tender sentiments these scenes must be delightful. Doubtless, splendour cannot have charms for you, or how many sovereigns are there who would engage you from your meditation to adorn a Court."

"Ah! sir, returned the Lady Palma, the sweet tranquility which I enjoy is far, far superior to my humble mind; for I am not calculated to bear the radiancy which spreads from a throne. My manners are simple; I am not adorned with accomplishments to display.—I am very humble, very, very humble."

The Prince, at this instant, displayed in his hand, a pearl of uncommon size and beauty. "You resemble, madam," said he, in my mind this chaste and

pure oriental, and would not this adorn a diadem; ah, madam, the dazzle of a thousand Jewels does not shew so beautiful!"

The Lady Palma instantaneously directed her eyes to the pearl, and discovered to the Prince an eagerness, she but ill attempted to conceal; "ah, cried he to himself, is it so? Victoria is right!"—That pearl, said the Lady Palma is beautiful, because of its purity, but weak, mortal, erring creatures, cannot be pure!" Pray sir, suffer me to continue my meditations. I do not wish to lose them for even the discourse of our admired Prince.

How severely, madam, returned the Prince Charles, must I suffer for that compliment; but cried he, before I leave you to those meditations, suffer me at least, to present you this emblem of your own purity. "Ah! impossible" cried the Lady Palma, "I must refuse even my Prince; I dare not accept a present. This world is nothing to me."

Nay, but madam, replied the Prince, this is suited to the simplicity of your own character; putting the pearl at the same time into her hand. It had been already taken by her eyes, and she now held the rich oriental between her fingers. Pray sir, cried she, in an affected agitation, suffer me to return it. That you cannot do, replied the Prince, it would offend your own delicacy of mind. I acknowledge, returned the lady, the munificence and brilliancy of your present, but what will be said by the Milanese Ladies of this; they are very censorious, and though my consent to take this present is given with pure and chaste respect only, I shall yet be subject to their insinuations.—They will never know how it came madam to your possession. It is only just sent me from my jeweller and he is discreet, I hope however, in a few hours, to see it adorn your bosom. The Lady Palma appeared to blush at the last idea, and hastily entreated the Prince to leave her.

It is not proper, said she, that you should be here with me, in so unfrequented a place, we may be observed, and then I am lost. " Farewell then, madam cried the Prince, taking her hand which he attempted to kiss." Oh, Prince, repeated the fair devotee, let me go, I entreat, I must not suffer this. The Prince desisted; he perceived that he was to have no more than the interview for his pearl, but he trusted to a yet more precious gem for further success.

The next day, at dinner, the Lady Palma had indeed decorated her bosom with the pearl, but it could only be seen suspended between the avenue of her dress, scarcely sufficiently open to display the treasure, and not sufficiently so to display much greater treasures, in the opinion of the Royal Libertine.

The Prince was satisfied with the advance he had made towards the accomplishment of his wishes, and found the lady so much more condescending, since the present he had made her, that

he hoped every thing from the same source of temptation; he determined therefore to renew his efforts with more vigour and address, and indeed change the disposition of the siege entirely; he now scarcely allowed the fair devotee an instant unengaged with some significant conversation or with those little attentions and politenesses, which demand a reply; he endeavoured continually to meet her eyes, and intermingle in his looks voluptuous glances which would have at once offended a really modest woman. The Lady Palma appeared to avoid and dislike them; at the times however, when the occasion required that the Prince should take her hand it was sure to receive the pressure of his, but which she dextrously ascribed to friendship. "My Prince," said she, softly, "has, I perceive much friendship for me; how I am honoured by his goodness." It was thus that things went on for more than a week when both the

Prince Charles and his secretary Margotus began to think the fair di Palma had really no passion whatever but for jewels, and that their attempt would be fruitless to thaw the ice of her bosom. Margotus recommended the application of more jewels, and which should be followed by a stratagem to take the lovely di Palma off her guard.

In a few days a most expensive and superb necklace arrived.—The Countess was dressing, and her maid Mula had accidently left the chamber door open, at the instant the Prince was passing to his room. The Countess was in a charming undress, and the Royal Libertine with great homage and politeness presumed to enter the room, bowing respectfully and enquiring after her health.—The Lady Palma assumed a haughty demeanour; she begged, she desired that the Prince would leave her; her neck was nearly uncovered, and she sought at the in-

stant, to recover the drapery ; her maid had left the room for some rose-water. The Prince produced the necklace, and approaching delicately, said, " Madam, I rejoice that I am just in time to place these jewels about the neck of the handsomest woman in the world—suffer me this homage." The lady, whether confounded with the address of the Prince or dazzled with the brilliancy of the diamonds, suffered the whole to pass without a word, though the Prince took care, in the adjustment, to be more exact than was necessary and then bowing again, respectfully, leftthe apartment.

The Countess di Palma reddened as the Prince withdrew ; but she was incapable of resentment, her whole mind was ingrossed with the present he had just made her ; she placed the glass before her, and was transported at the size and lustre of the diamonds.

After dinner, whether the Marche-

sina was really ill, or whether it was so settled between her and the Prince Charles, left the room. The Countess had suffered the necklace to remain about her neck, and the Prince took care to tell her how much it became her, besides which he practised some little sportive dalliances which he could not have ventured before. The lady, however, blushed and signified her uneasiness; the Prince nevertheless persevered and gained ground so much that he had no doubt that a breast knot composed of the same *illustrious friends* would accomplish all that he could desire particularly if accompanied by a handsome settlement.

The ready Margotus, always willing to flatter the desires of his royal master took care to raise the money that would be wanting, from the principal usurers in Milan.

After some days, the successive presents received by the Lady di Palma

began to weaken very much the power she at first held of forbidding the encroachments of the Prince on her reserve and delicacy, and at length the prude yielded her honour for the breast knot of jewels, and a handsome allowance.

The Prince was delighted with his choice, until a few weeks afterwards he found the lady had made the same sacrifice some months before to one of his most abandoned courtiers, and who still was in correspondence with her.

During all this season of intrigue and dissipation, the Princess Andreolla continued to experience neglect; she indeed had never met with that affection and respect which gives to a husband the best security that he can hope for the honor of a wife. Many gay cavaliers fluttered about her person which was portly, and of royal mien; the Princess Andreolla, on her part, offended at an indifference she had not merited, grew now alike indifferent to the Prince, and

some feuds arose which became the conversation of the court, and of the people of Milan.

Another lady, the wife of a Cavalier, became now the object of attraction to the Prince. The Comtessa Catarina di Rialta, and no pains were to be spared to obtain her for the Royal Libertine. The Lady Catarina was above the middle size, admirably formed and approaching to that comeliness which so much pleased the Prince Charles, she had also the attractions of good nature, and some wit; her husband was of that description of nobility whose stars shine but dimly in the courtly hemisphere; he was just as dull as his lady was brilliant, and was of so little consequence in the affair that the great master of intrigue Margotus had no difficulties to apprehend in that quarter; more was expected with the lady, and the fortress of her virtue it was thought could only be taken by *approaches*, and such would have been the mode of attack had it

not been told to Margotus, by the Lady's most intimate friend, that the Lady Catarina had actually been flattering herself, for many months, to bring her figure to the admirable standard of perfection of the Prince's taste. This *secret service* of Margotus was well paid for and the intelligence from the enemies' camp, acted on without delay; the lady at length surrendered without discretion; for she did not make a fifth part of the rich bargain contracted for by the Lady di Palma.

CHAP. XII.

Of the growth of the Princess Gabriella in figure, and of the expansions of her mind and character.

THE young Princess Gabriella began now to display a Royal Presence, and her form to take that symmetry and roundness which promises the luxuriant charms of woman; her mind began also to present capacities to the observer much superior to those noticeable in the different branches of the Royal Personages of Milan. Her temper was kind and her manners courteous when she was satisfied of the goodness of heart, of any of the people about her; but proud, and her manner haughty whenever she suspected artifice, or intended restraints from her duties of affection. Never did person puzzle the courtiers more than the young Princess,

while her commanding presence, and determined air of expecting obedience made them afraid of practising to her the usual cunning of those spies constantly placed by the one part of a royal family, to watch the other part.

The young Princess Gabriella had however some faults, but they proceeded only from the excess of her virtues, she was so generous and magnanimous, that in the support of her opinion, in favour of those she thought her friends, she would forsake the temperance of discourse suited to so young a Princess and decide with the warmth, and royalty of a Queen. She chose to judge of the propriety of the motives of her own actions, and as they were always pure and honest, she scorned to hesitate, or disguise. Happy promise to the people of Milan, of that high spirit and love which, wherever it rules, must be the glory an Empire, dispelling and dispersing the mists and clouds of prejudice, and partiality which surround a

throne, and extending its rays like the sun even to the utmost limits of the universe.

Many attempts had been made by the subtil courtiers to alter the fine natural temper and character of the young Princess to that *artificial* one which according to the vice, and crookedness of politics is considered essential to govern; happy will be the day when this *Machiavelian* system may terminate, and when neither in courts nor in cities the *necessity* of vice in transactions may be longer acknowledged.

The young Princess in the early part of her education, had had the blessing and happiness of instruction from a good, and religious lady, and from a mild and dignified priest whose discourses were of a nature to lead the mind to virtue, and to a sense of conduct for this world that might not deprive it of the contemplation and hope of another and better destination.

The Prince Charles, to do him justice, never permitted any restraint on the inclination of the young Princess, in her practices of piety, or in the duties of her religion; he always treated such subjects with the most becoming deference, and often attended mass in company with his daughter, the better to show his approbation of her devotion. It is unfortunate when a mind possesses a sense of what is *right* that it has not courage to resist the attractions to what is *wrong*, and indeed the actions of such when representing virtue are always liable to the suspicion of its being mere hypocricy. There are also another set of men in the world, who insist on the beauties and virtue of decorum, in their habits and vices, and are satisfied with the imposition they practise on themselves by throwing over the deformities of their lusts, a covering that may conceal them from the public eye, but surely such observance is

merely from respect to the opinion of the world and not from respect to virtue. It was not however possible to decide how the heart of the Prince was, in his conduct to the young Princess, and conjecture would gladly have entertained the hope of the reality of worthy motives, had not the same neglect of the Princess Andreolla continued, which was at first fatal to the happiness of the Royal Union. Bad advisers, however, when once they sow the seeds of mischief do not eve forsake the culture and propagation, so that it requires great strength and perseverance to destroy the weeds which choak the purer imagination. Many persons of Milan were not how ever, without hopes that the Prince would one day forsake the dissolute, and seek the good.

CHAP. XIII.

The character of a weak brained Lord who ought to have been noticed before, and of the part he takes against the Princess Andreolla.—He becomes at the same time the idol, and the ideot of the populace.

AMONG the courtiers and ancient adherents of the Prince Charles, was the Count Marmozzeti. This personage had begun life in a military career; and had distinguished himself as much by cruelty as by courage, he was so prodigiously vain that it was impossible to offer too much incense to this Cavalier. The Count Marmozzeti was of a tall thin figure, his manners french, his face resembling that of a baboon, and his mind a tissue of pride, servility, arrogance, affability, reserve, and con-

descension, a parasite to his Prince, and a prodigal towards supplying his desires.

The Count Marmozzeti had made himself popular with many, by being at the head of the various orders of the *illuminati*, those tribunals which pretend to the secret excellencies of the heart and understanding, but which in truth contain no new revelations of virtue.

The Count Marmozzeti was the lyon's provider; and was for many years engaged in supplying his extravagancies through the medium of the usurers and jews of Milan. The Count had under him numerous of the jackal tribe, the chief of which was Signior Jacobini, brought up in a jesuit-school and whose views were not obstructed by any scruples whatever, for he had not any religion, and as for his reason it was a moveable scale that was placed to any degree best suited to his interest.

The Count and his emissary, the Signior Jacobini were, however, very successful in their contributions on the wealth of Milan for the Prince; too many however, who supplied money from the hope of honors or preferment, had reason to lament that they had placed their faith in such hands. One of them, the Priest Glacioso, tortured and tormented with applications for payment of debts in which he had become involved by wasting his property and time, on these idols of his devotion, at length in a fit of despair destroyed a life which would never have been so embittered but for the dangerous service in which he had engaged in hopes of becoming some day a Cardinal

Another, a tradesman of Milan, who had saved a handsome fortune engaged the whole in securities for the Count Marmozzeti, and finished existence much in the same way.

Many more who, from vanity, ambition, or the desire of pleasing, had embarked in the dangerous traffic of procuring loans for the Count Marmozzeti, were hurried down the stream, wrecked in their fortunes, and taught by melancholy experience, that for all the service over, the active agent, will be left to the consequences of the risk, its disgrace, and mischief.

The Count Marmozzeti, however, sustained himself until the Prince Charles had power, when his services were requited by a handsome appointment; of which, the Chevalier Jacobini also felt the benefit, and it was not long after that a great speculation was played off by the Count and his man Jacobini on the Exchange of Milan, but which had nearly proved fatal to the ambition of the Count Marmozzeti and to his love of unspotted honor, and which, indeed left a stain on his character that could never after

be effaced. Many persons, in Milan, ventured at first to speak openly of the transaction, and it was to have become the subject of a public tribunal when, strange to tell, the party who had declared the facts, signed a formal recantation, which muzzled the mouth of ill fame, but could not prevent articulation of the story, sufficient to be understood.

Signior Jacobini, the Jesuit and agent of the Count Marmozzeti was a man of obscure origin, who had made his way in the world by being a ready pander to the great people of Milan. If they were in necessity for immediate loans he had the art of ferreting out usurers to supply them, whilst he profited by his arrangements so much as to grow richer every day, imperceptibly even to the persons who employed him; the fact was, he always managed to fix the robberies they endured, on others and actually believed that he himself passed for a very honest man. Signior

Jacobini though he had got into the army of the state, and was a ready slave to the nobles, professed himself to be a republican, and so contrived, that he kept well with the opposite parties in Milan: in short, it was his apparent frankness and independence, that protected him from the suspicion of intrigue. Yet in the *secret chambers*, where he met the mischievous and the ill disposed, he would throw off the mask, ridicule the sacred religion of the country, and the person of the Duke his sovereign: often has he been heard to drink over the midnight cup "*The Duke, and a Crown of eternal Glory to him!*" Yet this man was raised by the vain and weak Count Marmozzeti to a command in the Milanese army.

Shortly after, however, the Count Marmozzeti obtained a brilliant appointment which made flattery less valuable, and popular praise less needful, he was at the summit of all that he could well expect, and being there, he left his friend Signior Jacobina

whose command had terminated, to lament that he had exhausted so much of his time in his service.

The Count Marmozzeti was a busy meddler, and so attached to the Prince Charles, that he would talk for ever to serve his master's purposes. The Count affected on such occasions to be vastly wise, would nod, and shake his head, and try to entrap and confuse the plain man, with all the cunning of a low pleader in the courts of Milan. This senator must needs mix in the intrigues against the Princess Andreolla, wherein his pompous display of something like discernment and his attempt at sagacity made him as ridiculous as his gravity was laughable; in short the noble busy body made every thing worse, was *hooted* and despised.

Luckily for the Count Marmozzeti, he left Milan about the same time, and he in some measure *preserved* his character by *preserving* his distance.

The Prince Charles, with all his faults, had discernment enough to know the contemptible race of nobles who hovered about him in the hope of great appointments, and many of them were disappointed by his choice of better and wiser men as his servants; but, thus it is, that the vile panders of the pleasures and of the enormities of the great, are considered as useless in all affairs which require honor and probity!

CHAP. XIV.

The Libertine Don Vicentio, lays a plan for the seduction of the lovely Stella di Zabarilla and succeeds.—The fatal consequences.

THE return of the infamous Don Vicentio to Mantua, was hailed by the young nobility as the most auspicious event that could arrive for the renewal of the gaieties and dissipations of the Court, whilst the people of Milan lamented the occurrence as dangerous to the safety of innocence, and to the happiness of the community.

There happened to reside in Mantua, about the time of Don Vicentio's return, a beautiful young female, named Stella di Zabarilla, of the ancient house of that name, but whose parents had been so reduced, that she had been compelled, after their death, to seek

the protection of the Lady Margaritta di Montmirol with whom she lived as companion.

The lovely Stella was of small stature, but of such a luxuriancy of form as even the pencil of Guida might have failed in describing; her eyes were full of animation, and expressed good nature, gaiety of mind, and honesty of character; her heart was full of love and she was a total stranger to deception. Such was the being, however, which the devil, Don Vicentio, chose to fix on for a victim; he had heard of her exquisite beauty from some of the young lords, and as he knew the Lady Margueritta, the introduction was not considered a difficult affair. The Prince was nevertheless disappointed, for that Lady took care to shun every pretence of the Libertine to get access to her company, and even declined the honor of a visit from him at the Palace, situated at Ponzano on the river Po.

Fortune however, favoured the Prince Vicentio, who made frequent excursions to the neighbourhood of Ponzano; the lovely Stella wandered one night in the summer of the delightful climate of Italy, to a beautiful spot, whither she frequently retired with her guitar, which unhappily for her she had scarcely began to touch before she discovered two handsomely caparisoned horses, attached by their bridles to a tree close to her; when poor Stella who was, though very innocent, very romantic, said aloud; "well here are the steeds but where are the Knights," and then with her usual gaiety, unsuspicious of danger, touched her guitar with so much taste and expression, that it would not have been surprising if a gallant Cavalier had stopt to listen, and to praise the performer. In short, poor Stella was discovered, and the Prince Vicentio elegantly attired, presented himself before her at the instant she was about to

depart. The Prince was extravagant in his praises of her singing, at all which compliments she only laughed immoderately, and entreated he would let her go. The wicked Don Vicentio found in short, that no ordinary circumstances would detain her; he had recourse therefore, to a falsehood, and invented a tale that he was a fugitive that he had had the misfortune to wound, dangerously, a Cavalier with whom he had had an affair of honor, and that he must conceal himself from his pursuers; the tender-hearted Stella felt instantly an interest in the safety of the stranger, and, fruitful in expedient, whenever humanity demanded it, persuaded him to shelter from the threatened storm, in a cottage occupied by an honest villager which was close at hand. The Prince pretended to be very grateful, but felt some uneasiness at the chance of his being discovered to be the heir to the throne of Mantua. The honest old villager had not however much knowledge

of Princes, and on being told the story received the Cavalier and his servant with great kindness, while the good natured unsuspicious Stella went to the palace to take some refreshment to the stranger, fearing that the cottager could not furnish the delicacies to which the Cavalier had been accustomed, and this attention she paid, every day, until at length the Prince by his gallantry and politeness grew more and more agreeable to her, and she began to feel the progress of a passion in her heart that she was formed to know, but which caused it to beat with violent motions.

The gay disposition of the beautiful Stella was admirably suited to expose her to the dangers of seduction. The Prince managed to take advantage of her playfulness, and to make her innocence serviceable in the schemes of guilt. At length after various attempts, an hour begun in harmless gallantries, ended in the fatal indulgence of the passions, and the lovely daughter of the ancient

house of Zabarilla fell a victim to the lust of the monster, Vicentio, who persuaded her that as soon as he could appear again in Mantua the marriage ceremony should be performed.

A few days afterwards the Prince, who had no sooner accomplished one vilany than he longed to engage in the novelty of another, affected great pleasure at the receipt of letters brought from Milan, by a faithful domestic, by which he said he was made acquainted that the wounded Cavalier had recovered, that he would immediately go to Mantua, and write her a dispatch when the ceremony might take place, still concealing his real name and rank under the feigned title of the Count Liberi. Poor Stella did not suspect any wrong, and she parted from her lover with an affection that was by far too troublesome to him in the disposition he was in.

Many days elapsed without any dispatch arriving for poor Stella; she be-

gan to be uneasy at the cause; her bosom palpitated with fear and apprehension as day succeeded day, without news; she addressed the Virgin Mary more devoutly than ever, and after her prayer, was frequently fixed to the spot, in an agony of suspense; she grew more and more melancholy endeavouring to invent new excuses to her mind for a negligence she could not account for. The Lady Margueritta observed the change in her favorite; she saw the tear frequently dropping down her cheeks, she saw no remains of her gaiety and wit, and the eyes which had so often sparkled with innocent levity were dull and heavy. The Lady Margueritta felt interested in the sorrow of her companion or rather friend; she spoke to her with affection, endeavoured to draw the secret from her, and suspected that it was love, but she would not explain.

Poor Stella gradually declined, the colour left her cheeks, her eyes were moistened with tears, and her lovely

person, the prey to anxiety, apprehension and remorse, surrendered by degrees its charms; her complexion altered and melancholy, brooding melancholy fed on beauties which it seemed envious to destroy; she was constantly seeking opportunities of being alone, and shunned as much as possible any conversation with the Countess Margueritta, though she would yet, at times, mix with the anguish that her eyes expressed, a look of kindness and good nature that atoned for her reserve.

After some months the wretched Stella ventured to write to the Count Liberi at Mantua, and immediately received the following answer:

" MADAM,

" I have not a doubt of my being highly flattered by the sentiments of some fair lady, who has the charms of beauty as well as mental accomplishments; I have to regret however that I cannot be the Cavalier intended to be so greatly honored, as I do not know a lady of the

name of Stella, nor of the family of Zabarilla, nor is there any other Count Liberi in this capital, except myself."

The sorrow which had hitherto swelled in the bosom of the wretched Stella, now burst the bounds of prudence, she fell on a couch, insensible, and the letter dropt from her hand; the Lady Margueritta entered the apartment at the instant, and after calling for assistance, examined the paper, which explained only that there was a greater mystery. The good Countess applied so much tenderness to the afflicted bosom of her friend, that she obtained from her an acknowledgement of every thing but her guilt—so unwilling is the human character to shew how much it has fallen.

The Countess Margueritta consoled Stella, in some degree, by persuading her that there must have been some mistake, and that her lover would at length return, and to complete her good intention of relieving an afflicted mind she

made the determination of visiting Mantua and of going to the places of amusement until the unhappy Stella could see her lover.

Shortly after the arrival of the Countess in Mantua, she took her friend Stella to one of the assemblies of the nobility, resorted to on account of the music; the rooms were crouded, and the sweet cadences of the performers had awakened the mind of the suffering Stella to an excess of sensibility when it was announced that the Prince Vicentio had arrived. The Countess was no sooner acquainted with the circumstance than she said to her companion: "Now, my dear Stella, I will shew you the greatest Libertine in all Mantua;—come hither with me." The poor Stella felt something like apprehension at the words of her friend, and as the Prince approached them, her confusion increased with the certainty of his being her betrayer; a glance had escaped the Prince before he disco-

vered what he could never have conjectured the person he beheld before him was Stella di Zabarilla, but no sooner was he convinced of its being her, than with a cool, averted look, he turned deliberately on his heel and left her to her own reflections. Alas! poor Stella was incapable of reflection, she exclaimed to the Countess Margueritta, "take me away I am mad!" and from that hour her reason returned no more.

The Countess Margueritta began now to conjecture the true history of the sufferings of her friend, and retiring home immediately called in the assistance of the doctors of Mantua.

The unhappy, dishonored Stella, died in a few days afterwards, and although the Prince Vicentio was written to by the Countess, he did not deign to visit the misery he had occasioned. There never perhaps was a heart more valuable, and more faithful than that of Stella di Zabarilla but it was so susceptible as to be easily practised on

by the designing; the whole soul of the tender Stella was love, no artificial conduct opposed the seducer, and no experienee protected her.

Stella di Zaberilla fell a victim and the seducer survived, for a short time his triumph.

CHAP. XV.

The Prison.—Visit of the Princess di Stalma to Henry St. Florentin.—Of a Countryman with good news.

HENRY ST. FLORENTIN passed several days in the prison of the citadel, without hearing any thing further of the charge made against him, and which had been preferred by the peasants; and in this painful suspense, he suffered the indignity of his situation with fortitude, though he had only one ray of hope that his innocence might be proved, and that shone faintly on his mind, from the recollection of the Stranger Friend.—"Surely," said he, "that Stranger who appears acquainted with all the events of my life, must know that I am confined in this place; but, alas!

his presence could not now avail me, and even the evidence which he could give of the affair would not be believed against the testimony of Montorio, who is so highly favored by the Prince Charles and the Marquis di Simonetta. No, I see plainly that I am the devoted victim of these wretches, unless an almighty providence interferes to save me."

Henry St. Florentin was engaged in these meditations, when the sentinel brought in two dispatches for him, the first containing the command of the Prince Charles for him to prepare for the examination into the charges brought against him, in the affair with the Signior di Sabro, agreeable to his own request, and the next, countermanding the former dispatch, and appointing a day for his trial for the murder of the Count Montaltus. Thus Henry found himself deprived at once of all chance of clearing his character

on the former charge, and almost yielded himself up to despair as to any hope of being able to contradict the latter.

Henry St. Florentin was in this anxious state of mind, when the Princess di Stalma was introduced into his apartment, and the centinel retired. The Princess fixed her eyes on Henry, with a look of the most expressive concern, mingled at once with hope and despair: she did not hesitate, however, to take his hand, and enquired, with the greatest earnestness, if he was innocent of the charge of murder; "but before you answer, Henry St. Florentin," said she, "be sure that you may repose confidence in me. If you are guilty pray to heaven for mercy, and meet your fate with awful humility, for a rash and fatal vengeance even against an enemy. If you are not guilty, rely on me for succour: I will go to the foot of the throne of Milan myself, sooner than you should fall a victim to the machinations

of the wicked." Henry St. Florentin took the hand of the Princess, and with frankness, declared his innocence, and related the manner in which he had been basely attacked by his accusers, "and you may believe this, madam," said he, "when I tell you that, let the event be what it may, since I am blessed with a visit from you, I will not lose my serenity to the last; though," said he, "I am afraid that I must fall a victim to my enemies: but let me drop that subject at present: I have news for my Princess—the Marquis, your husband, lives! and I am the happy messenger of the intelligence." "Heavens!" cried the Princess di Stalma, "what do you tell me, and are you not deceived?" The Count St. Florentin then detailed the particulars of his adventure with the hermit, with so many circumstances, that she was convinced that he had seen her husband, and that she would shortly behold him in Milan.

The sadness of countenance which the Princess di Stalma had so long worn brightened, for an instant, but the gleam of joy was but transient, it was succeeded by a deep sigh, and an expression of exquisite regret, "Ah! where is my boy, my son," said the Princess, "would that I could present him to his father."

The Princess di Stalma now took her leave, pressing Henry tenderly by the hand and saying expressively at the same time, "Henry St. Florentin, you are innocent, and rest assured that, however improbable or even impossible it may appear, Providence will find a way to save you and confound your enemies. I will now," added she, "go to the Duke, and entreat his highness that the most severe scrutiny shall be made into the conduct of Montorio and Montaltus on that fatal evening: this cannot be denied me, and you shall see me, Henry, seated on the bench of jus-

tice, trusting not in the sanctity and wisdom of an earthly judge, but relying on the Almighty Judge of the universe."

The Princess di Stalma was now retiring from the gloomy chamber of St. Florentin, when she stopt to listen to an altercation at the gate; some one had asked to see St. Florentin, and had been denied, but still persisted in his attempt to gain admittance, urging that it was of the greatest consequence to the prisoner. The sentinel, however, notwithstanding all that he could say, would not suffer the stranger to pass, when the Princess desired to see him, with which request the sentinel was obliged to comply. It was a poor countryman, and the soldier finding that it was the wish of the Princess di Stalma to hear what he had to say, left him in the room, as his orders were only not to suffer any one to converse with St. Florentin alone.

The countryman asked permission for a few moments to collect himself sufficiently to explain the cause of his visit, and then begun—"Ah! Sir, I come to do you justice; it is time, God knows; and the lucre of money shall not prevent me any longer. I have travelled a long way to find your dear lady mother, Sir, that I have." "My mother Sir," replied Henry, a little displeased, "is no more." "Aye, so you may think, Sir, but you are mistaken—she's alive, Sir! and was heard of on the other side of the Rhine, only twelve months ago, and what is more extraordinary, your name is not St. Florentin!" "Not St. Florentin!" exclaimed the Princess di Stalma. "No, Madam," replied the Peasant, "and I can tell you, moreover, what it really is, if you will give me time." Henry requested that the poor countryman would proceed with as little delay as possible on so eventful a subject, and the man con-

tinued—" Why, Sir, it happened so then that my wife, about two-and-twenty years ago, lived at Rosemburg, near the palace of the Prince di Stalma, whose daughter, sweet lady, married privately, and against the consent of her father, the Marquis di Simonetta, who had fled from Milan, having killed a great cavalier of the house of Trivulsi, in combat. A child was the consequence, by which event the Prince became acquainted with the whole affair: the infant was immediately taken away from the mother, who was told that it was still-born. Poor lady she could not be deceived in that respect, for she had heard the infant cry: however, it was taken away, and brought to our cottage, with a large present for my wife, and a promise of so much money yearly from the Prince, while the affair was kept secret. My wife was also required to leave that part of the country, and so we settled in the forest

of Apulia, where a neighbour had a nurse child of the Lady St. Florentin, named Henry, and so my wife and her became great friends. The poor child Henry, died, in the absence of its mother, who went abroad on some business of consequence. Well, Sir, the poor woman had nothing to support her, but what she was paid for the infant, and my wife thought that she would have gone distracted, she was so frightened at the thoughts of telling Lady St. Florentin of the death of the child, so they laid their heads together, and my poor woman thinking that it would be cruel for the child of the Princess di Stalma, to be wronged out of its birthright, and to be brought up only as the son of a peasant, settled it with her neighbour that as the ages of the children agreed, she should pass off the little Frederick di Stalma, with the Lady St. Florentin for her child, by which means it would be well provided for, and have a good education."

During the time of the peasant's story, the Princess di Stalma felt the most indescribable tumult of mind; she paused, hesitated, doubted and was convinced; when a torrent of tears fell from her eyes, as she embraced her son. Henry, no longer the Count St. Florentin, but the Prince di Stalma, astonished at all he heard, embraced his mother with transports of affection, and overcome with the history of Providence, wept in his turn with gratitude to heaven; nor did the honest peasant when he found that it was the Princess herself to whom he had related his story, feel less transport; he was so overjoyed that he could scarcely proceed further, to tell her that his wife, who had suffered illness, felt so much remorse for receiving money, to the injury of the real head of the House di Stalma, that she had made him travel into Germany in search of the Princess, and gaining no tidings of her, except

that she had been banished no one knew whither, and since hearing that the Count St. Florentin had been accused of murder, he had travelled in haste to make the discovery who he really was, thinking that it might be of consequence: that looking forward to the chance of his birth being some day made known, his wife had preserved the very mantle which the attendant had thrown about him, as soon as he was born, and also the apparel of the infant Henry St. Florentin.

Delighted as the Princess di Stalma was at finding a husband and a son, that transport was allayed by the sad reflection that a life, in which she was so deeply interested, was endangered by the deep malice of cruel enemies: one consolation, however, she received, which was that the high birth of her son, would make him more an object of interest with the Princes of the land, who would not suffer his fate to be de-

termined without great deliberation, and she even resolved to send a dispatch to the Prince her father.

The Princess di Stalma comforted her son with the sure promises of heaven to its despairing children, and full of the holy faith of the cross, she bestowed on him a benediction from lips so pure and chaste that angels even would have come down to ensure the blessing, and have assisted to perplex and confound the designs of his enemies.

The poor countryman was desired to be in attendance, to prove the facts which he had related, while the Princess did not lose an instant in making known to the court of Milan, the distinguished rank of the prisoner. The Count Montorio was applied to, to relate afresh the story of the assassination, and so inflexible and determined was he in his charge, that the Prince Charles was compelled to appoint a day for the tribunal to decide on the innocence or

guilt of the Prince Frederick di Stalma. The whole court of Milan felt a deep interest in the fate of so excellent a cavalier, who was himself supported by his natural courage and gallantry, and who felt only for the situation of the Princess his mother.

CHAP. XVI.

A Grand Carousal at the Palace of Trezzo.—In the midst of the Festivity a Dispatch is received by the Prince Charles, with the news of the miserable Death of the Prince Vicentio, after his having killed the admirable Critchton.

ANOTHER grand carousal was held at the palace of Trezzo, accompanied by all the customary scenery, decoration and splendor of that seat of luxury. It had not, however, its chief ornament—the Lady Laurenta di Volturna; for the Prince Charles was not long devoted to her charms. She was impatient, haughty and jealous, and besides had secretly entertained a real passion for the Count St. Florentin. The Prince Charles she

regarded merely as a Royal Libertine, who viewed her only with sensual regards, destitute of any respect. The Lady Laurenta di Volturna wanted more: she desired that homage which Princes are not in the habit of bestowing, and on the least neglect, would work herself into a rage that was vented on the most beautiful girandoles and lustres of the palace. The mind of the Lady Laurenta, once disturbed, was like a tempestuous sea; otherwise, in the moments of her repose in "*L'Isola d'Amori*," she was captivating and enchanting, by the sweetness and softness of her disposition. Like her own music, she was at one instant full of soft and sweet cadences, and the next, filled with all the fire and fury of the passions.

The Prince Charles, satiated with indulgences which had destroyed his health and spirits, appeared now to require a voluptuous repose, and to want

a friend, rather than a mistress. A lady of the court, the Marchesina Colomba di Visconti, was the chosen favorite, for the purpose of soothing the royal libertine in the cares of State, and of entertaining him with the language of the grossest flattery and adulation. The Marchesina was a woman of a fine figure, with all the grandeur of form, so much admired by the Prince, and besides possessed a captivating and enchanting temper, which never suffered her royal guest to yield to unpleasant reflections. The Marchesina Colomba, assisted by the versatile Margotus, allowed no gloom to hang over his mind. The Prince, with the Marchesina, was the most liberal, the kindest, the most munificent, the most charming, and the most excellent of all human beings. Homage and flattery, delightful to all Princes, was from her lips possessed of that superior magic which enslaves the understanding, and directs the will;

such was the state of the Prince Charles with this accomplished *Dejanira* of the Court of Milan.

The Prince found also in the Marchesina Colomba a lady versed in the intrigues of courts, and who was capable of the diplomacy said to be necessary in the affairs of state. Her advice was taken on many occasions, and the only check to her influence, was the pure and excellent understanding of the Princess Gabriella, which was paramount to every thing that could be wished by her illustrious parent.

The dinner at the palace of Trezzo was graced by the presence of the Marchesina Colomba, and the illustrious guests had scarcely tasted the rich fruit and wines, before a messenger arrived, in haste, with dispatches, sealed with black wax, and which contained an account of the death of the Prince Vicentio.

The dispatches stated that a Stranger

had appeared in Mantua of uncommon figure and character, his person eminently beautiful, but that that beauty, at the same time, was consistent with such activity and strength, that, in fencing, he could spring, at one bound, the length of twenty feet on his antagonist, and used the sword in either hand with such force and dexterity, that scarcely any one had courage to engage him: the name of the stranger was Critchton.

It appeared that the admirable Critchton, for he was so called, had studied at St. Andrews, in Scotland, that he had gone to Paris, in his twenty-first year, and had affixed on the gate of the college of Navarre, a kind of challenge to the learned of that university, to dispute with them, on a day fixed, offering to his opponents, whoever they might be, the choice of ten languages, and of all the faculties and sciences. That, on the day appointed, three thousand auditors assembled,

when four doctors of the church and fifty ministers, appeared against him, and one of his antagonists confessed that the doctors were defeated. That he gave proofs of knowledge seemingly above the reach of man, and that a hundred years, passed without food or sleep, would scarcely be sufficient for the attainment of such learning. That after a disputation of nine hours, Critchton was presented, by the president and professors, with a diamond and a purse of gold, and dismissed, with loud and repeated acclamations.

That from Paris, Critchton went to Rome, where he made the same challenge, and met with the same success, in the presence of the Pope and the Cardinals. That afterwards, in Venice, he contracted an acquaintance with the learned Aldus Manutius, by whom he was introduced to the greatest men in the city. That he then visited Padua, where he engaged in another public

disputation, and begun his performance with an extempore poem, in praise of the city and the assembly present, and concluded with an oration equally unprecedented in praise of ignorance.

That the same Critchton then published another challenge, in which he declared himself ready to detect the errors of Aristotle, and of all his commentators, either in the common forms of logic or in any way which his antagonists should propose.

It appeared nevertheless that these acquisitions of learning were not gained at the expence of any pleasures in which youth are apt to indulge, or by the omission of any accomplishment of a cavalier, he had arrived to perfection in the arts of drawing and painting. He was an eminent performer in both vocal and instrumental music; he danced with the greatest excellence and grace, and on the day of his disputation at Paris, had exhibited his skill in horsemanship before the

court of France, where, in a public match of tilting, he bore away the ring upon his lance, fifteen times together.

This stranger, it seemed, likewise excelled in domestic games, of less dignity and reputation, and, in the interval between his challenge and disputation, at Paris, he spent so much of his time at cards, dice, and tennis, that a lampoon was fixed on the gate of the Sorbonne, directing those who would see this monster of erudition, to look for him at the taverns.

That so extensive was the acquaintance of the Stranger with life and manners, that, on his arrival at the Court of Mantua, in an Italian comedy which he exhibited before the Duke, he personated fifteen different characters, in all which he succeeded, without difficulty; as such were his powers of retention, that by once hearing an oration of an hours length, he could repeat it exactly, and, in the recital, follow the

speaker through all his variety of tone and gesticulation.

After the admirable Critchton had been presented to the Duke of Mantua, he visited the tomb of John di Medicis, and the convent of the Religeuses, of St. Ursula. That he was much delighted with the vast extent of the palace of the Duke, and with the number of richly furnished apartments, more than five hundred and fifty in number. That the skill of the admirable Critchton was no less in arms than in learning; nor was his courage inferior to his skill, and that, at the time of the Stranger's arrival, there was a prize-fighter, who travelled about the country as a general challenger, who had defeated the most celebrated masters in Europe, and who had actually killed three antagonists in the city of Mantua, in such way, that the Duke had actually repented of having granted him his protection. The admirable Critchton, however, looking

on his sanguinary success with indignation, offered to mount the stage against him, and to stake fifteen hundred pistoles on the result.

That the Duke, with some reluctance consented to the proposal, and the day being fixed, the combatants appeared. Their weapons, the simple rapier, which was then newly introduced into Italy. That the prize-fighter advanced with great violence and firmness, but that the Stranger contented himself with calmly parrying his passes, and suffering him to exhaust his vigor in his own fury, when Critchton became the assailant, and pressed on him with such force and agility, that he thrust him thrice through the body, and beheld him expire at his feet; after which he divided the prize, which he had won, among the widows of those husbands who had been killed by his opponent.

That the Duke of Mantua, after having received so many proofs of the

Stranger's merits, on the arrival of the Prince Don Vicentio di Gonzago, his son, appointed him his tutor to complete him in every science and accomplishment; on which occasion he composed the comedy wherein he exhibited so many different characters. That the loose manners and the turbulent disposition of the Prince were, however, fatal to his improvement under so wonderful a master, and led to a dismal catastrophe.

That the admirable Critchton had been equally conspicuous for his gallantries among the ladies of the Court of Milan, with whom he was presently a favorite. That the Princess Laura di Verona had been detained at Milan by the Duke of Mantua, her uncle, who desired her intermarriage with the Prince Vicentio, his son; by which alliance the Italian state of Verona would have become attached to the Duchy of Milan, as it would also by the death of

that Princess. That the admirable Critchton, on his arrival at Mantua, danced with the Princess of Verona, at the palace of the Duke, which awakened the jealousy of the Princess Paulina of Padua, his daughter, who had become enamoured with the person and accomplishments of Critchton, at the tournament, and which lady determined to destroy the beautiful and virtuous Princess of Verona. That in the stillness of the night, when all was peaceful and silent in the streets of Mantua, she was observed with a lighted torch in her hand, and which it seemed, in a transport of jealous rage, she threw into the corridor of the palace of the Princess of Verona.

That the palace was presently in flames, but that the admirable Critchton, who had been rambling about the streets of Milan, was alarmed by the cries of fire among the servants, who called for help to save their mistress..

The gallant Critchton was presently amidst the flames, and bore the Princess Laura, in his arms, in safety to the street.

That the Lady Paulina no sooner heard of the safety of her rival, the Princess Laura, and by whom she was rescued (though, in fact, she no more than respected her deliverer, being in love with a French nobleman, the Count di Montgomery) than she became enraged with jealousy, and, as it was not known, until after, who it was that had fired the palace, she obtained an order from the Duke to make the Lady Laura a prisoner, on a charge of treason, which plan was carried into effect.

That the prison of the Lady Laura was situated on the borders of the river Mincio, in a sequestered spot. That the Princess Paulina had hired bravoes, who went thither, by appointment, and

to wait in a gondola for the arrival of the Lady Paulina.

That the bravoes having arrived at the place before the arrival of the Lady Paulina, they agreed to go to a tavern, in the next town, to drink, until the appointed hour. When, in the moment of their absence, the admirable Critchton, accompanied by the Count di Montgomery, who had gone in disguise for a walk, in search of the place of confinement of the Princess Laura, arrived at the spot in the same instant with the Lady Paulina, who seeing the gondola, mistook them for the bravoes she had employed, and gave them the key of the prison, with instructions for them to seize the Princess, to bear her into the boat, and to throw her into the river.

That the admirable Critchton and the Count di Montgomery were shocked at the cruelty of the Princess Paulina, and

carried her rival on horseback across the mountains towards Verona; but that a dreadful storm came on, which obliged her to return to Milan, and remain in disguise, and that it being the time of the carnival, when every body go masked, she considered herself safe during the feast in that city.

That the Lady Laura, being masked, walked on the borders of the Lake de la Garda, where she accidentally met the admirable Critchton, who she discovered by his plume of feathers, and unmasked, at which instant they were observed by the Lady Paulina, who drew a dagger to stab her rival, which she was prevented doing by the timely arrival of some bravoes, who attacked the admirable Critchton; but who, throwing away his guitar, stood immediately on his defence. Neither his courage nor his skill forsook him; he opposed them with such dexterity and spirit, that he soon dispersed them, and

disarmed their leader, who throwing off his mask, discovered himself to be the Prince Vicentio, when Critchton falling on his knees, took his own sword by the point, and presented the handle to the Prince, who immediately seized it, and in a fit of drunken fury and jealousy, plunged it to his heart.

Thus was the admirable Critchton, in an instant, deprived of all the excellencies of his nature and understanding with his life.

That the Prince Vicentio, after the affray, went to the house of a notorious courtesan, named Fontana, where he indulged in such an excess of gluttony and drunkenness, that he was taken with a stupor, from which he was never roused again, but in which he died, detested and abhorred.

That the Court of Mantua had testified its concern for the death of the admirable Critchton, by a public mourning, and that the palaces of Italy were

already adorned with pictures of their prodigy, representing him on horseback, with a lance in one hand and a book in the other.

That the Princess Paulina, finding that her rival did not actually love the admirable Critchton, applied to the Duke, withdrew her charge against the Princess di Verona and repaired, in the most noble manner, all the injuries she had done her, and prevailed on the Duke to suffer her marriage with the Count di Montgomery.

The Prince Charles, who had read the dispatch by the side of the Marchesina Colomba, seemed disturbed, and a sudden gloom appeared on his brow. The Lady Colomba noticed the alteration, and taking his hand, entreated that he would suffer her to read the letters: after which she laid them down with a smile, saying—"The Prince Vicentio was a gross libertine; he did not pursue his pleasures with the taste and

delicacy of *my* Prince of Milan. Let us not think any more of the unhappy wretch." With which words, the Marchesina poured out a goblet of Brescian wine, which she presented to the Prince Charles with the sentiment—'Love and wine:' which was reverberated from Margotus to Moscadella, and round the table. The Marchesina leant towards the Prince, on the couch, whereon they were seated, and soothed him with the flatteries most acceptable to his desires. She spoke of his looks—of his brilliancy —of his wit; in which praise the courtiers all joined, and the Royal Libertine fancied himself a greater prodigy than even the admirable Critchton.

Notwithstanding, however, all that could be done, the Prince still drooped, and it was not until after repeated cups of wine, that he forgot the impression which the death of the libertine Vicentio, had made on his mind. Thus

it is that it frequently happens, we take the very same fatal means to remove a disease, which has destroyed another before us, still prefering, to the last, that present opiate by which we have ease and die.

CHAP. XVII.

The Tribunal.

THE day being arrived for the trial of the Prince di Stalma, the court was crouded, at an early hour, with some who had come very far from curiosity, and with others, who took an interest in the fate of a young and noble cavalier, distinguished above his companions for his generous and gallant conduct, and who they could not be made to believe was guilty of the charges brought against him.

The judge of the supreme court was seated on the bench, at an early hour, and the Princess di Stalma, in right of her pre-eminence, was placed on his left hand. The Prince Charles was expected every instant, and the cruel Mon-

torio was already in court, prompt and eager to destroy his victim. The Marquis di Simonetta also was present; but the Lady Juliana had been left at Bulafera, ignorant of the charge which had been brought against the Prince di Stalma, and of his newly assumed rank, both of which circumstances had been concealed from her, from a conviction, in the mind of the Marquis, that the prisoner was actually guilty, and that he should very shortly be relieved from any further consideration on the subject of Henry.

At length the Prince Charles arrived, and took the regal chair of justice; a stillness prevailed in every avenue of the court, and the awful proceedings commenced.

The Prince di Stalma, yet stiled the Count St. Florentin, appeared before his judges with a manly and dignified deportment. In his countenance was depictured a mild and heavenly compo-

sure, his eyes appeared brightened with the conscious glory of innocence, and his commanding and noble aspect seemed already to intimidate even the hardened Montorio.

Montorio, after some hesitation and perturbation of mind, the effects of guilt, but which, unhappily for the Prince di Stalma, was mistaken for regret and reluctance, commenced his charge and briefly stated that he had been attacked by Henry, assisted by four bravoes, and that his son, Montaltus, had fallen by their hands; "but," said he, "it has pleased Heaven to spare me the melancholy office of proving these facts, against a cavalier whom I loved and esteemed; there are men in court who witnessed the whole affair."

The countrymen were now called, and gave an account, that hearing a pistol fired, they ran to the spot, and found Montaltus weltering in his blood on the ground, and the Count Monto-

rio pursued by the Prince and a man on a horse, and that Montorio only escaped by taking refuge in the thickest part of the forest.

It was in vain that Henry interrogated the peasants, they knew no more of the affair than they had stated, except that the Stranger, on horseback, came afterwards to the next village, and sealed up the papers found in the pocket of the dead cavalier, but that they had not heard any thing of him since.

The Prince Charles, from the insinuations of Montorio, entertained already a prejudice against the prisoner, and hastily demanded if he had any thing to offer in his defence.

"Sire," replied the Prince di Stalma, there is a personage, I believe of no mean rank, who could prove my innocence. I had entertained hopes that he would have appeared, for in the time of extremity or danger he has never yet been absent."

" I would willingly wait the arrival of such a friend," replied the Prince Charles, " if I could doubt the honor of the Count Montorio, or the narrative of these honest countrymen. I know that it is the practice of some nobles both here and in Mantua to make use of the *stiletto*; that you employed such, appears from the witnesses, and above all there seems a motive for it, since you presumed to hope for an alliance with the only daughter of the Marquis di Simonetta."

The Marquis di Simonetta was next interrogated, whether it was not true that the Count St. Florentin had presumed to an alliance with the Lady Juliana, the only daughter of the house of Simonetta, and which was corroborated by the Marquis, and not denied by the Prince di Stalma.

After the court had been some time engaged in consultation, an awful silence ensued, which was, at length, inter-

rupted by the Princess di Stalma claiming the privilege of her son being tried, by appeal, before the Emperor Charles, whose subject he was; but which, on deliberation, was denied her, as the documents had not arrived, which could alone sustain the evidence of the peasant.

Another awful pause ensued, during which the supreme judge conferred with the Prince Charles, when, at length, he arose from his seat, and calling Henry St. Florentin by name, pronounced the solemn sentence of the court—That he was judged guilty of the murder of the Count Montaltus, and that the sentence of the court was, that he should be broken alive on the wheel.

A murmur of compassion was echoed through the avenues of the court of justice, even to its gates. The Prince di Stalma, however, heard the sentence unmoved, except that he regarded his mother, the Princess, with anxious so-

licitude ; her calmness had not forsook her ; she looked up to Heaven, and her face presented a picture of strong reliance on Almighty aid, even at the last extremity.

The wicked Montorio displayed all the ingenuity of a hypocrite ; he affected to shed tears, and many of the spectators actually began to think that the prisoner was guilty.

The Prince Charles appeared uneasy, and as if he wished that St. Florentin might have been acquitted of the charge ; he was astonished at his composed appearance, and was anxious to retire to the palace of the Marchesina Colomba, where he might forget, in the delight of her table and conversation, all the melancholy occurrences of the day.

The court was on the point of breaking up, when a murmur was heard without the walls, and a Stranger of elegant figure and deportment, and habited in a red mantle, was noticed to

pass through the croud, and proceed to the foot of the throne of justice, with a scroll, which was presented to the supreme judge, who perúsed it attentively, changing countenance at every instant.

The scroll contained the pardon of Henry St. Florentin.

The Judge placed the parchment in the hands of the Prince Charles, repeating, at the same time, involuntarily, "A pardon for Henry St. Florentin!!!"

The words were no sooner uttered, than, swift as the electric fluid, the response flew from one part of the judgment hall to the other, till the avenues of the court resounded with the cries of "A pardon for Henry St. Florentin."

The Stranger was retiring, when the Prince arose from the regal chair:— "Wait," cried he, "I acknowledge that this instrument bears the royal signature, but I am yet uncertain who it is that could have made so ill a use of it, as to pardon murder."

The Stranger, at these words, replied, "The Prince di Stalma is no murderer."

"No murderer!!" repeated the Judge.

"No," answered the Stranger, "but since his enemies have prevailed against him, I have produced his pardon, sealed by our Royal Prince."

The Prince Charles changed colour as the Stranger spoke, and commanded that he should instantly throw aside the disguise he wore.

"That disguise," replied the Stranger, "is worn by one who has never made an ill use of power—behold," said the Stranger, throwing aside the red mantle, "behold, Royal Sir, your daughter, the Princess Gabriella!"

The whole court was astonished, when beneath the disguise of the red mantle, appeared, in all the brilliancy of virtue and beauty, the Princess Gabriella of Milan.

The Princess knelt before the throne

at the feet of her royal father; loud acclamations ensued. The Princess di Stalma rose from her seat. Montorio folded his arms in an attitude of gloomy discontent. The Prince di Stalma, though astonished at the inteference which had preserved him, appeared dissatisfied with a pardon which seemed to imply a crime.

The loudest acclamations were now heard in the court, and every eye sparkled with joy at the conduct of the Princess Gabriella.

The whole court were astonished at an event so unexpected, but particularly Montaltus, who trembled with rage, at having missed his prey.

The Prince Charles descended, and with a look of admiration and love, embraced his royal daughter, the Princess Gabriella, and ascending the steps of the throne with her placed her at his side.

The Prince now desired the supreme

Judge to read the pardon aloud, when another extraordinary interruption took place: a Stranger, habited like the first, in a red mantle, rushed forward, crying "Forbear."

A new tumult of apprehension ensued, and the wretch Montaltus began again to hope, if not to triumph.

The supreme Judge demanded of the Stranger the cause of his presumptious intrusion.

The Stranger replied, in a determined voice, "The Prince di Stalma requires no pardon."

"Requires no pardon," repeated the Judge, "What mockery is this?"

"I repeat," cries the Stranger, "that he requires no pardon—the Prince di Stalma is not guilty!"

The Judge expressed his anger and regret: "I am sorry, Stranger," said he, "that your presumptious interference should, at such a moment, have prevented the royal benignity about to

have been solemnly pronounced, and which could not have been recalled. Mistaken man, the life of your friend is now again at stake, unless that you can prove your assertion."

"I have a witness," replied the Stranger.

"The witnesses," replied the Judge, "have been already examined."

"I demand," replied the Stranger, "that *he* may be heard."

"Demand!" replied the Judge.

The Princess Gabriella spoke aside to the Prince Charles. "Suffer the Stranger to proceed," cried the Prince, "let us hear what he has to say."

"It is a witness," continued the Stranger, "who saw the base Montorio, assisted by the *stiletto*, engaged against the unarmed Prince di Stalma."

"Who is that witness," interrupted Montorio, with impatience, "produce him."

"It is," replied the Stranger, "myself!"

"And who art thou?" demanded the Judge.

"Cesar di Simonetta."

"He is not in Italy," interrupted the Marquis.

"Behold him here," cried the Stranger, throwing aside his mantle, "behold Cesar di Simonetta."

The Prince Charles, who was well acquainted with the prowess and gallantry of the Count Cesar di Simonetta, felt astonished, and at once believed the assertions he had made, while the Marquis di Simonetta, confounded at the presence of his son, felt for the first time an impression that he might have been deceived respecting St. Florentin, who he could have no longer an objection to as the Prince di Stalma.

The Prince Charles called on Montorio to explain his situation at the time the Count Cesar di Simonetta arrived at the spot; which he did with the most artful contrivance. He stated that he was defending himself at the moment

the Count arrived, having seen his son fall at his feet, and that the Count Cesar might easily have been deceived by the appearance the affair had at that time."

The Court was now completely undecided as to which side the weight of the evidence lay, when the Count Cesar demanded that the Peasants, companions of the others, who had borne the body of Montaltus to the next village, should be examined.

Every eye was fixed on the Count Cesar di Simonetta, who presenting a sealed pacquet to one of them, demanded if he recollected it again, "and what it contained?" "Why, Sir," replied the countryman, "I see that it has never been broke open; so that it must contain the letter which I took out of the pocket of the Count Montaltus, as he lay weltering in his blood and there be blood upon it too, if that be it, and you know that you desired me to put it myself into the pacquet, and then

you sealed it up before two great cavaliers, in the village."

The Count immediately ordered that the pacquet should be opened, when it was found to contain a letter, covered with blood, which had flowed from the wound of Montaltus. The letter was in the hand-writing of Montorio, appointing the time and place for the attack, with sufficient particulars to show the design and plan of the assassination.

Montorio turned pale at the production, and seemed to be at a loss what to say; when the Count Cesar demanded that Picardo should be again brought into court; which was instantly done by the honest Nicholas, who had never forsaken his master in his distress.

The vile Picardo, no sooner imagined that the guilt of Montorio had been discovered, than he began to accuse his master with all the villany of the plot, and described, to the satisfaction of the

court, the extraordinary circumstance of the change of the plumes, and of Montorio's shooting his own son.

The Count Montorio, confounded at the complete exposition of his guilt, had yet to suffer still greater mortification. The peasant arrived with the documents which proved Henry's title to the rank of the Prince di Stalma. Montorio had now only one solitary hope remaining, which was, that the Prince Charles, engaged as he had been with him in every scene of abomination and vice, would yet remain his friend, so far that no charge should be preferred against him, for his base conspiracy to destroy the Prince di Stalma; but in this he was mistaken. The Prince Charles, although he had liked the treason against virtue, detested the traitor, and held him in his misfortunes in utter contempt and derision. He commanded that he might be immediately thrown into a dungeon and

tried for his crimes, and when he attempted to expostulate, he was instantly seized by the order of Prince Charles himself, and bore away to his prison amidst the execrations of the multitude.

The rumour of the trial of the Prince di Stalma, had reached the elder Marquis di Simonetta, who had arrived at the house of his brother, and found the Lady Juliana affected to agony, at the intelligence which she had just received from a domestic. The elder Marquis, however, soothed her sufferings, and set out with her immediately for Milan, whither they arrived just as the wretch Montorio was leading out of court.

The Marquis di Simonetta received his brother with kindness and affection, and instantly yielded to him the star which he had worn in his absence, together with all the elder honors of his house; he further acknowledged that his pride had led him from a just con-

templation on himself and others, and had constantly betrayed him. "I perceive," said he, "after all, that the grandeur of virtue, only, is truly estimable, and am sorry that I denied to the noble and generous St. Florentin the gift which I now am ready to bestow on the Prince di Stalma, in case he may set the same value on its possession.

The Prince di Stalma did not lose an instant in presenting himself, full of kindness and forgivness, to the Marquis di Simonetta, and requested the Princess, his mother, to make suit for him with the Lady Juliana, who did not require much persuasion to yield to the entreaty of her lover. She was, indeed, delighted with his character, and in a dignified tone, said before the Prince Charles, "It is thus that Providence, secretly acting against a succession of powers, used to destroy the noble and innocent, at length breaks forth, like

the Sun, to disperse the clouds which hang over the councils of princes, teaching them that its mysteries, at times, contain events not to be foreseen nor understood, presenting a lesson to the guilty that the adding of crime to crime, gives no additional security; but that the day will arrive when all their plans will fail at once, or even against all their hopes the contrivance of ill must lead to good. And what has been the end of the libertine Vicentio? One single hour has deprived him for ever of the time which he used in the pursuit of what he thought pleasure; he cannot revel and riot now; he cannot lay his commands on his wretched associates to embitter the lives of his fellow creatures, to furnish his enjoyments: the career is over, and has left only for our contemplation the hateful history of a monster.

The Prince Charles, notwithstanding that his mind had become depraved

with the licentiousness of his habits, felt something more than a transient gleam of truth in his mind. He had startled at the picture which he had received from Mantua of the miserable end of the Prince Vicentio; it had opened his eyes to the danger and misery of vice. The speech of the Lady Juliana confirmed him in his belief of the certainty of that end to all alike, who pursue the gratification of inordinate desires, and he beheld, in the cha ...d lovely deportment and excellent judg ment of the Princess Gabriella erful temptation to taste of purer pleasures than he had ever known. The mutation was natural; for there is a continual acknowledgment that vice pays to virtue, through its whole career; the result of a consciousness of truth, which the libertine may amuse but cannot entirely repel. It was such a consciousness which occasioned the alteration in the mind of the Prince, assist-

ed by the events which had occurred, and the contemplation of the beauty and virtue of the Princess Gabriella.

The Prince Charles next desired to be made acquainted with the explanation of the mysterious interferences, which repeatedly baffled the schemes of Henry St. Florentin's determined enemies, and of the various good uses the Princess Gabriella had made of the royal signet.

The Count Cesar immediately obeyed the commands of the Prince Royal, and related to him the occurrences which had led to the use of the royal signet in favor of the Prince di Stalma. It appeared from the account which he gave that the Princess Gabriella, who had been educated in the convent of our Lady of Monta Carmel, with Celestina; the then supposed sister of the Count St. Florentin, entertained so much love for that lady, that hearing of Henry's virtues and misfortunes, she became in-

terested in every thing that concerned him. It was the Princess, therefore, with her friend Celestina, who formed together the romantic resolution of watching the occurences of the life of Henry St. Florentin, of preventing every ill, and of producing every good that lay in their power. The supposed absence of the Count Cesar, the lover of the Lady Celestina, favoured the design, while the good Aldus Manutius and the Father St. Roche, yielding to the entreaties of the Princess Gabriella, had suffered the Count Cesar to remain incognito in Milan, and were parties to the mysterious influence which operated from time to time, to render abortive the designs of Montorio and Montaltus. The Princess, for that purpose, presented the Count Cesar with a long red mantle, worn formerly by her grandfather, the Duke of Milan, and which was to serve the Count for a disguise. It resembled one which she herself wore

when she went about unknown, to help, and to save; but she endowed him with a yet more precious talisman—a royal signet, entrusted to her by her father, for the purpose of gratifying her desires to do good; with the express injunction of her using it with caution; for he knew that he had not any thing to apprehend like an abuse of such power, from so excellent a mind, except from an excess of humanity. It was by the help of such magic that the Princess Gabriella was able to work all the wonders that she did, in favor of the Prince di Stalma, assisted by the gallantry and prowess of Count Cesar di Simonetta. It was the Princess Gabriella who saved the Prince her father at the dinner, at the palace of Trezzo. It was the Princess Gabriella who, having seen Montaltus pour poison into the cup of Henry St. Florentin, advised him of his danger, and it was the Count Cesar di Simonetta, who preserved the

Lady Juliana from the brawles, after the fire, his influence over them having arisen from his having procured a pardon for them before, and their knowledge of a word pronounced by him at the entrance of the house.

The Count Cesar had scarcely ever lost sight of St. Florentin, but had nevertheless permitted many events to take place which might have been prevented, waiting for sufficient evidence to clear him altogether. The Count loved the gentle Celestina, and the Princess Gabriella loved the Count; yet such was her sentiments and honor, that with an heroism worthy of a Princess she suppressed the passion she entertained, and gave up the cavalier she loved to her friend. It was, however, but for a short time, the tender Celestina pined away in illness, and died; leaving, however, a written paper, directed to the Princess Gabriella, in which she alluded to her belief that she loved Count

Cesar, and entreated her to take his hand for her sake. "Let my friend," said she, "accept the inestimable heart and hand of the noble Count Cesar di Simonetta, and I shall die happy."

The figure which had been seen at the Palace di Simonetta, was that of the Count Cesar himself, who had found means, through the aid of a letter to the Monk Velaschi, from Aldus Manutius, to secret himself in the oratory.

After the explanation of the Count Cesar, the Prince Charles rose and embraced the Princess Gabriella. "The Count Cesar," said he, "has proved himself a noble cavalier, and he is descended from the Princes di Simonetta. Fulfill the wishes of your friend and from henceforth we will confide in his councils, and in yours. It is, I see, by the advice of the good only that Princes can be *safe* or *happy*."

The Prince Charles reflected on all that had passed, and admiring the

virtues of his daughter, the Princess Gabriella, visited with her the Lady Andreolla, forsook the company of the dissolute and depraved, and retaining all the elegant polish of his manners, with a more pure and excellent mind, became capable of bestowing happiness on himself, and on his people.

FINIS.

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